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The Beaver

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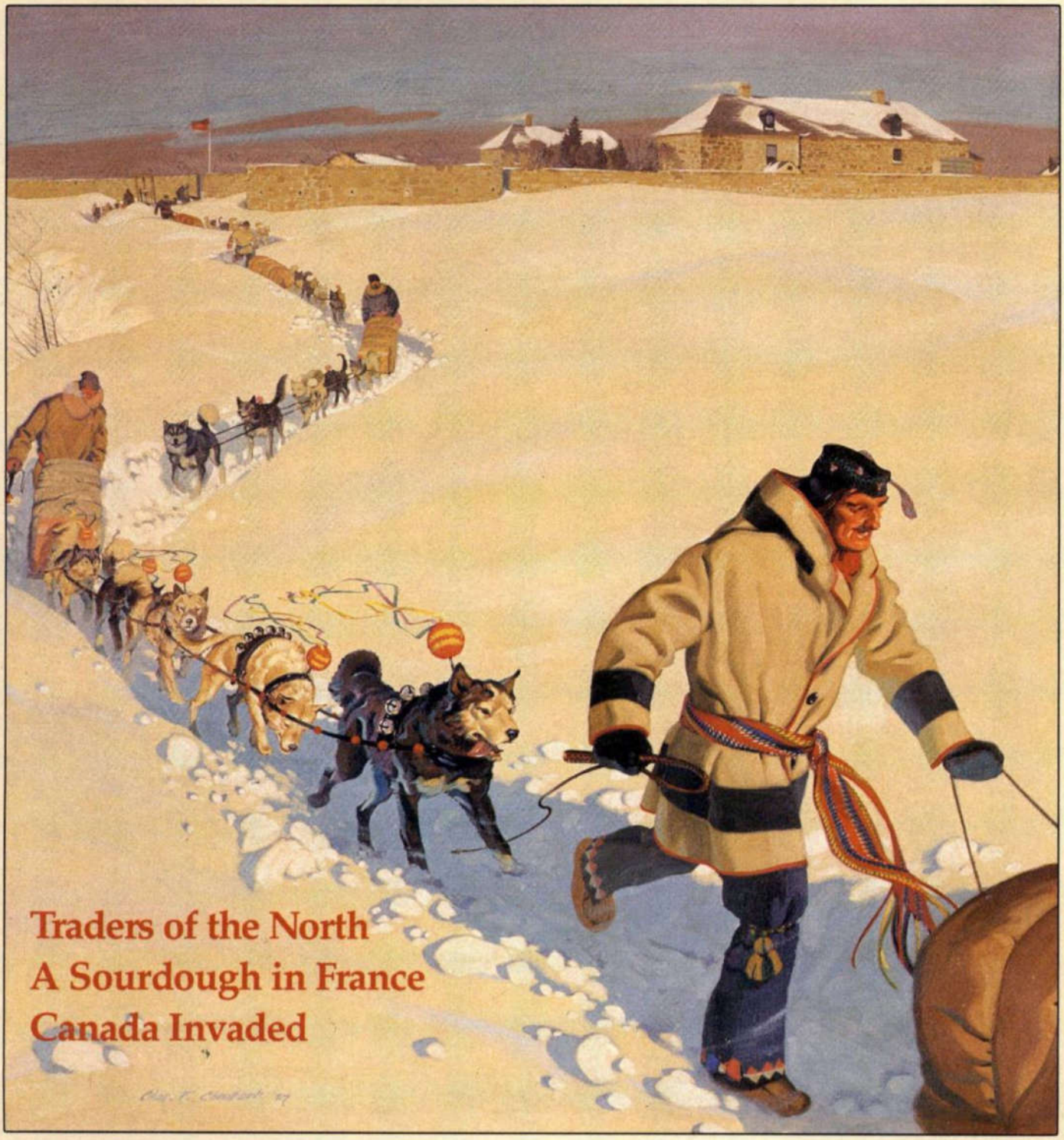
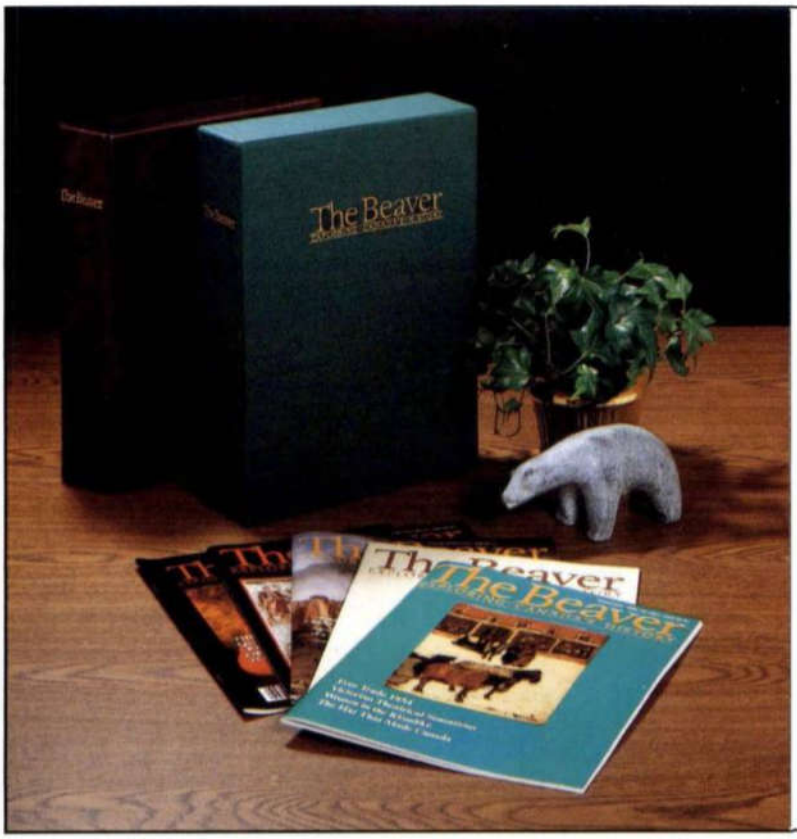


Traders of the North
A Sourdough in France
Canada Invaded



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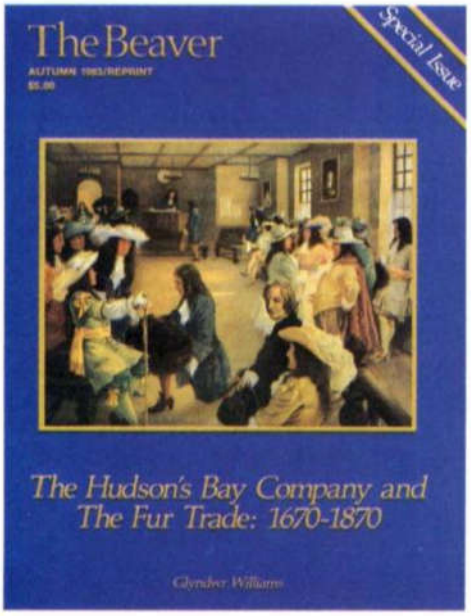

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND THE FUR TRADE 1670-1870

By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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THE BEAVER,
450 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Man.
Canada R3C 0E7

February/
March 1990
Vol. 70:1
Issued January 1990
$3.75

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"Last Dog Train Leaving Fort Garry" by Charles Comfort. (Hudson's Bay Company).

THE BEAVER: Exploring Canada's History (ISSN 0005-7517) is published bi-monthly by The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, known as the Hudson's Bay Company, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 0E7. (204) 786-7048.

U.S. MAILING ADDRESS: THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: (6 issues) $19 (Canada and United States). SINGLE COPY $3.75. OTHER COUNTRIES ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION $25.

SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1401.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0E7.

U.S. SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: USPS 759-610.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

Second class postage paid at Winnipeg and at additional mailing office.

While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss.

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PRINTED IN CANADA

The Beaver

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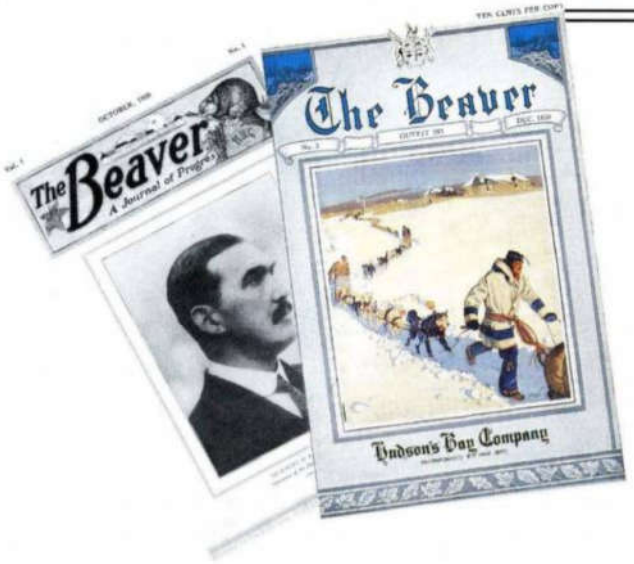


The Beaver
Seventy Years Of History

The year 1990 marks the seventieth anniversary of the foundation of *The Beaver*, no mean feat in a world in which a decade is considered a long time in the life of a magazine. In fact, few magazines survive the decade of their foundation.

The Beaver, against all the odds, has endured and we plan to take particular note of its survival when the seventy-fifth anniversary comes around in 1995. In the meantime, to enter a seventieth year in good health is well worth noting, even briefly.

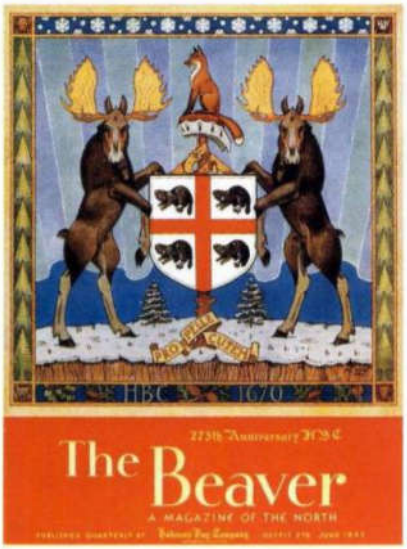
Why should the Hudson's Bay Company publish a history magazine? Most Canadians already know the answer to that question. The Bay is not simply The Hudson's Bay Company, a celebrated retail organization; it is also The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson's Bay. The "Company of Adventurers" is bound up with the history of this country. Vast areas of what is now Canada were once controlled or explored by the Company and at almost every point in our history the HBC had some role to play. A future Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Lord Strathcona, drove the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Company posts such as Fort Garry, Fort Edmonton and Fort Victoria evolved into important Canadian cities. Bay men were involved in the search for the Northwest Passage. They opened up much of Northern Canada to trade and settlement. They kept the peace and upheld the laws. A major Company shareholder, Lord Selkirk, established Scottish colonies on Prince Edward Island and at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. During the North West Rebellion of 1885 Company servants, respected by the warring Indians and Metis, went unharmed. The Company is frequently mentioned in articles in *The Beaver* that are not specifically about the fur trade or HBC matters because the Company so often seemed to be there when Canadian history was being made.

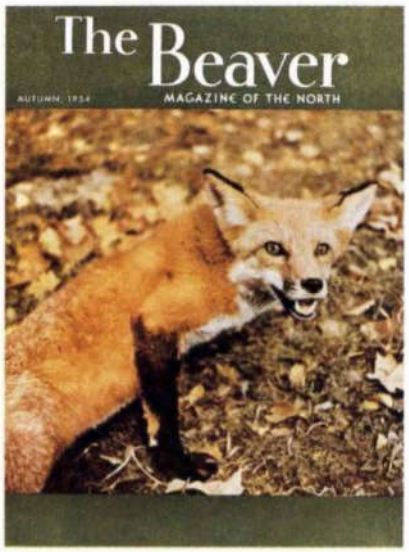
It took the Company a long time to realize that it had a story worth telling and that its story, to a remarkable extent, was also Canada's story. Established itself as long ago as 2 May 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company waited until October 1920 to establish *The Beaver*, a journal that would eventually evolve into Canada's popular history magazine, with readers across the nation and around the world.

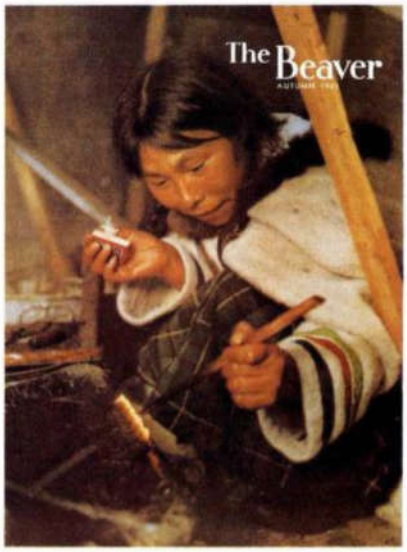
The first issue of *The Beaver*, subtitled "A Journal of Progress", prudently featured a stern portrait of the current governor, Sir Robert Molesworth Kindersley, on the cover. The 1920 *Beaver* was, essentially, a "house organ", containing accounts of Company social events, births, deaths and retirements. A feature article told of the grand opening of new tennis and quoits courts for the Winnipeg staff. There was a joke section that would make modern readers groan aloud and a column of advice for female employees that suggested that a woman's ultimate place is in the home, preferably in front of a hot stove. The editors of 1920 — men of their times — could hardly know that *The Beaver* would be edited, through many of its finest years, by women.

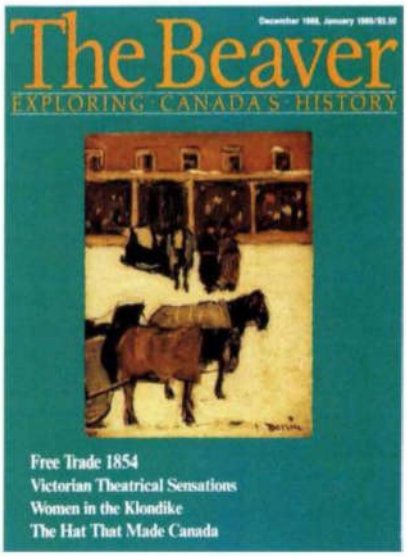
In that earliest issue, as well, there were items on Northern history, memoirs by Company oldtimers with experiences that went back deep into the nineteenth century and fascinating reports from distant trading posts that have now, themselves, become the stuff of history.

The years rolled on and *The Beaver* kept rolling off the presses. Over the years the magazine became an important forum for the discussion of Northern issues









and Northern history. People began to collect back issues and today complete sets of the magazine are much sought after on the Canadiana market.

By the 1930s, under editor Douglas MacKay, *The Beaver* had shed its social notes and sporting news and set out to establish itself as Canada's pre-eminent magazine of the "true North", with an emphasis on history and contemporary development. Under MacKay and subsequent editors such as Clifford Wilson, Malvina Bolus and Helen Burgess the magazine attained a sort of legendary status. Stephen Leacock, Margaret Mead and all the major Canadian historians of the day wrote for the magazine. Readers abroad also began to pay attention. In September 1935, John Buchan, the author of *The 39 Steps*, newly created Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada, wrote to the current governor at HBC headquarters in London: "My Dear Ashley Cooper, What a capital magazine *The Buffalo* is! I have read every word of it. Thank you for sending it to me." He was a busy man and the magazine might just as well have been called *The Buffalo*, except that the beaver, that troublesome rodent, is responsible, in many ways, for the existence of Canada as a nation.

There could hardly be a better name for a Canadian history magazine because so much Canadian history sprang from the fur trade and the search for beaver.

The Beaver, from being essentially a journal of the North and the fur trade, has now evolved into a magazine concerned with the social history of Canada as a whole. Still eager after seventy years, *The Beaver* rejoices in its anniversary year and thanks its splendid readers, past and present, for the honour of being a Canadian institution.

A Poet in the Wild

Rupert Brooke in Manitoba Cottage Country, 1913

By RONALD L. OLESKY

Rupert Brooke, scholar, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, poet and soldier, visited Canada at the age of 26 in 1913. He wrote engaging articles for London's *Westminster Gazette* and exuberant letters to friends in England recording his impressions.

Brooke's reports to England contain tantalizing observations of the Canadian wilderness which tempted the author of this article to follow him one recent October to George Lake, Manitoba. Here Brooke made his only venture into the Canadian wild which he otherwise observed at a distance from a train or boat. His account of the visit is replete with love and remembrance of England and his excitement at being in a new world.

He was to die in less than two years. In death Brooke became famous as a symbol of martyred youth. Winston Churchill, a personal acquaintance, contributed to his fame in a letter to the *Times*: "Rupert Brooke is dead. . . a voice had become audible, a note struck, more true, more thrilling, more able to do justice to the nobility of our youth in this present war than any other."

Brooke travelled across Canada and before his arrival in Manitoba stayed in the major cities of the East: Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto ("pronounce T'ranto, please" as Brooke advised in the *Westminster Gazette*). In early August 1913 he arrived in Winnipeg where he met his host, a former Rugby student named Howard Falk, who was the secretary of the Associated Charities of Winnipeg.

Brooke described Winnipeg as "hideous. . . even more hideous than Toronto or Montreal but cheerily and windily so." He also found that Winnipeg's library had inadequate intellectual provision, but of its people he remarked more favourably that they had "some of the free swing of Americans but without the bumptiousness". One cannot tell what architecture Brooke saw, but he would have arrived at the CPR station on Higgins Avenue and then made his way to the offices of the Associated Charities near Main Street where he left his bags and went off with his host.

At the time of his arrival in Winnipeg, Brooke had grown "tired of cities" and left Winnipeg for some rejuvenation at George Lake, a part of the present Whiteshell Park. Always a man of letters, he took a volume of Ben Jonson and a Jane Austen should he be "sated" by the wild. The volumes proved to be quite unnecessary.

Brooke's attitude to Canada was highly variable. He complained about the lack of history, the prevalence of commerce, and a "get rich and bigger" attitude among people. On being informed of substantial population growth in the cities Brooke mockingly replied: "I had to tell them, not without shame, that my own Town of Grantchester, having numbered 300 at the time of Julius Caesar's landing, had risen rapidly to nearly 400 by Doomsday Book, but now declined to 350."

He would also cross over quickly from calling Canada the "soulless Dominion" consisting of lumps of clay and patches of water yet "awaiting their Wordsworth"

'If I should die . . ."

Rupert Brooke, regarded by many as the "golden poet" of his generation, was born at Rugby, Warwickshire, in 1887. He attended Rugby School and was a leading figure at King's College, Cambridge, where he became a Fellow in 1913. His first volume of poems was published in 1911 and during 1913-1914 he travelled in North America and the South Seas, a journey that inspired many of his most memorable poems.

He was on his way to the Dardanelles with the British armed forces when he died of blood poisoning on the Greek island of Skiros on 23 April 1915. He is best remembered for his poem "The Soldier" that begins, "If I should die, think only this of me: / That there's some corner of a foreign field/ That is for ever England. . ."

National Portrait Gallery, London

Rupert Brooke, portrait by Clara Ewald, 1911.

and occupied mainly by people who were "inassimilable lumps", to exclaiming to a friend how the wild was "infinitely superior to your crawling London existence".

In the 77 years since Brooke's visit, civilization has not moved much closer to George Lake. It is 110 miles northeast of Winnipeg near Pointe du Bois where Winnipeg's first power station was built two years prior to Brooke's visit. The lake is protected from undue human contact by the Winnipeg River which must be crossed and travelled, and a portage of one and a half miles to the lake. This much has remained the same. In Brooke's time rail service was available part of the way. As he wrote, "so firstly rail, and then by a truck... to a power station by a lake and then on foot and then in a canoe and on foot, and we got there."

George Lake consists of three, almost separate, basins of water having an aggregate length of over eight miles running north and south. At maximum, from east to west, the lake is two miles wide and has an average width of one mile. The shore line is rugged with much exposed sloping rock broken by deep clefts.

Brooke arrived at the lodge of a Winnipeg hunting and fishing club built on a 50-foot granite cliff overlooking the northern basin of the lake. The lodge was initially built by a contractor of the Pointe du Bois power station at the suggestion of the city fathers. It was taken over in 1917 by the George Lake Fishing Club, a private corporation with a roster of prominent Winnipeggers that is still active. The original lodge building, where Brooke stayed, was destroyed by fire in 1929 and replaced by the present structure.

The view from the cliff remains, a panoramic outpost over the blue grey lake and the rough rocky terrain covered with jackpine, spruce, poplar, and birch. One is immediately impressed by the clear water of the lake, which Brooke reported in the activities of his first day: "My friend and I bathe all day — diving off rock into the clearest and sweetest of blue water — and row and fish, and try to sail a canoe and get tipped up and light great fires at evening and listen to stories and sleep and eat."

That evening (2 August 1913) Brooke reported that the trapper who looked after the lodge had gone out in his canoe hunting in the early evening. Brooke speaks of him with admiration: "a fine fellow with a handsome face and a shock of curly, black hair, who has hunted and trapped over the whole of North America, can

Actress Cathleen Nesbitt, 1912.

find his way anywhere, shoot anything, and do anything."

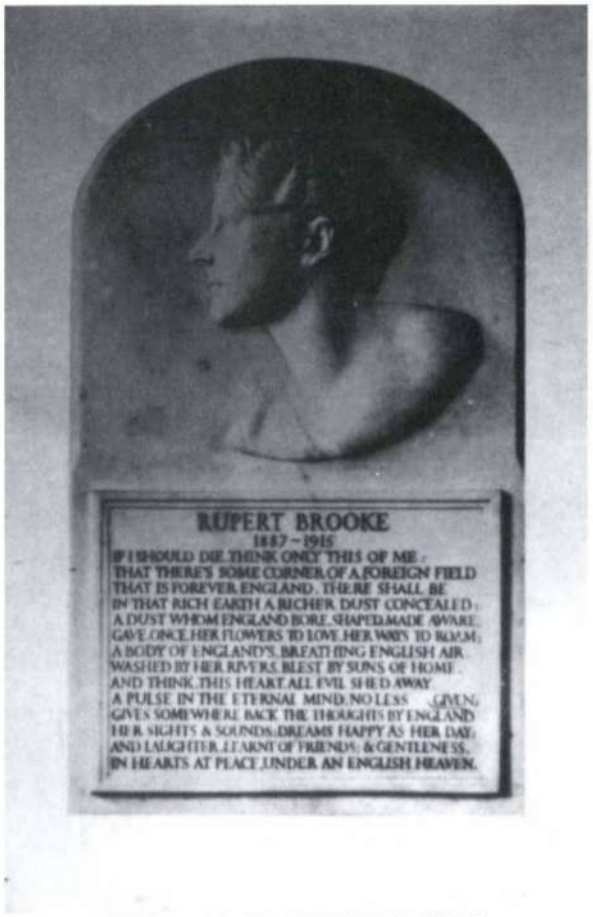
The trapper returned about 10:30 in the evening having shot what Brooke described as a "caribou" at the southern end of the lake. The animal's remains now lay heavily in the canoe. Brooke assisted in hauling and stringing up the "creature" under the light of a great bonfire at a small bay below the lodge.

As Brooke writes: "It was a queer sight, lit up by the leaping flames of the fire... the black water of the lake, muddy with trampling at the edge, and streaked with blood, the trapper in the tree, this great carcass hanging at one end of the rope, my friend and an Indian and I pulling our arms out at the other, the head (severed) gazing reproachfully at us from the ground, everyone using the most frightful language and the rather ironical and very dispassionate stars above. Rather savage." Here Brooke put aside his complaints about Canada and was taken up with the primitive.

At the site of Brooke's "caribou episode" we dreamily looked about the shore (now lined with the aluminum boats of the fishing club members) as if it had only happened a day or two ago and some trace might yet remain — so fresh do Brooke's articles and letters seem.

The following day, 3 August 1913, was Brooke's 26th birthday. He investigated the lake that day and was inebriated by the "wild". We followed Brooke's path by canoe across the lake (130 feet at maximum depth) through the "grey whispering reeds" at the narrows where Brooke caught two pike, to the beach he landed at on the east side of the middle basin of the lake.

We did not have Brooke's good fortune in fishing. A long-time area resident reported that fishing had been poorer this year because of low water levels and hot summer weather.


RUPERT BROOKE
1887–1915
IF I SHOULD DIE, THINK ONLY THIS OF ME:
THAT THERE'S SOME CORNER OF A FOREIGN FIELD
THAT IS FOREVER ENGLAND. THERE SHALL BE
IN THAT RICH EARTH A RICHER DUST CONCEALED;
A DUST WHOM ENGLAND BORE, SHAPED, MADE AWARE,
GAVE ONCE HER FLOWERS TO LOVE, HER WAYS TO ROAM;
A BODY OF ENGLAND'S, BREATHING ENGLISH AIR,
WASHED BY HER RIVERS, BLEST BY SUNS OF HOME.
AND THINK, THIS HEART, ALL EVIL SHED AWAY,
A PULSE IN THE ETERNAL MIND, NO LESS
GIVES SOMEWHERE BACK THE THOUGHTS BY ENGLAND
HER SIGHTS & SOUNDS; DREAMS HAPPY AS HER DAY;
AND LAUGHTER, LEARNT OF FRIENDS; & GENTLENESS,
IN HEARTS AT PEACE, UNDER AN ENGLISH HEAVEN.

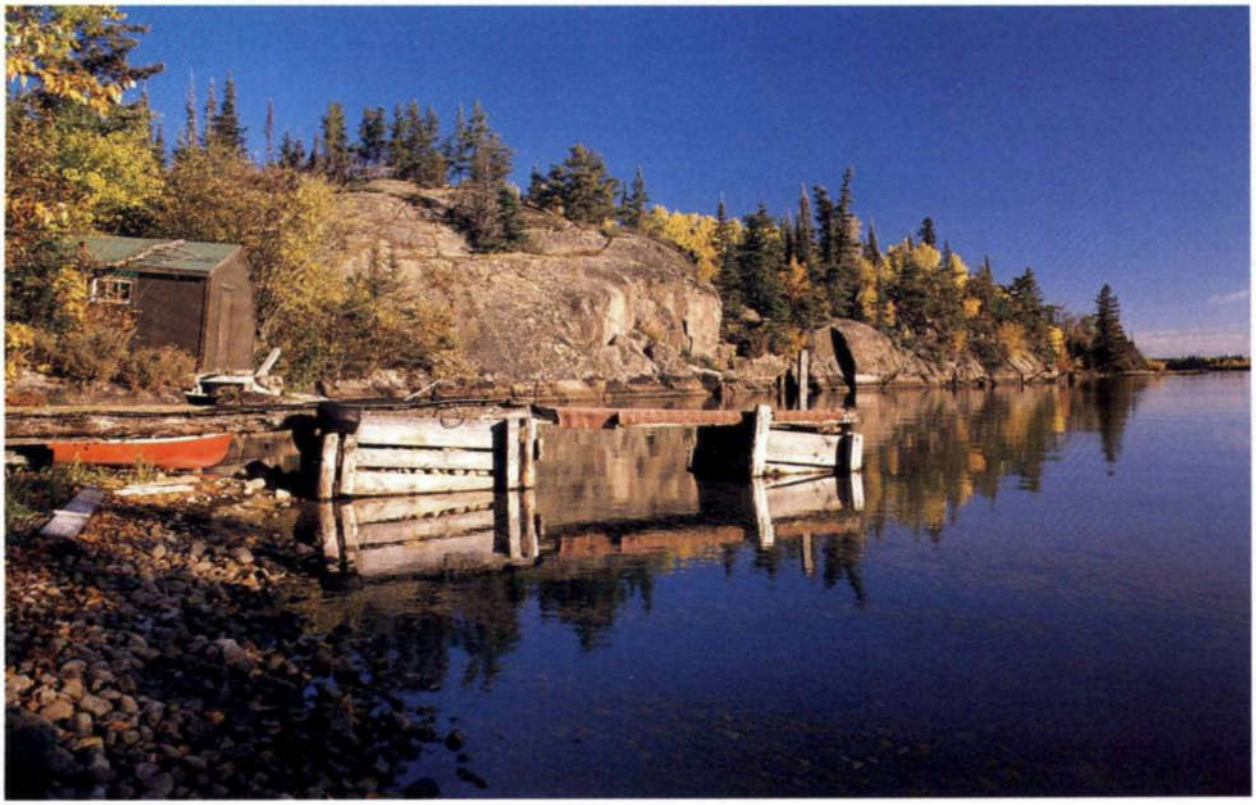
The Rupert Brooke memorial, Rugby School.

It was enough to discover and see firsthand the beach which Brooke accurately described as "red gold". The colour of the sand and the clarity of the water combine at the shore to create a 10 to 15 foot strip of red gold water the length of the beach.

Here Brooke celebrated the wild by casting off his clothing and lying "quite naked" on the beach, as he proclaimed in correspondence to his close friend, the actress Cathleen Nesbitt. He carried on further to camp in this "in-touch-with-nature" style. He reported to Miss Nesbitt that "cooking and eating a meal naked is the most solemnly primitive thing one can do" and that "I'm living the most wonderfully and incredibly romantic life you ever heard of...".

We walked the beach from end to end to take in some of the impressions left on Brooke. There was little trace of human activity. An abandoned log cabin was found 20 yards off the beach 'It was being overtaken by the "great woods" and had only the rusty iron frame of a bed inside. Perhaps it was the cabin of the trapper "to the east" described by Brooke.

The only sign of life on the beach consisted of deer and bear tracks also noted by Brooke. So fresh were



Blaine Shell photograph

Blaine Shell photograph

Bear track on the shore, George Lake.

Brooke at age 26, called by W. B. Yeats "the handsomest man in England".

the tracks that any moment we expected to see, in Brooke's words "a bear stumbling along" or "a little red deer . . . treading the wild edge of the lake and forest with a light, secret and melancholy grace." The bear and deer tracks on the beach seemed to confirm that we were at the place where Brooke walked.

Brooke wrote about his George Lake visit without naming the lake in his articles for the *Westminster Gazette*. Looking out on the lake Brooke wrote:

> It is that feeling of fresh loneliness that impresses itself before any detail of the wild. The soul — or the personality — seems to have indefinite room to expand. There is no one else in reach. . . . In such a country as this there is a rarified clean sweetness. The air is unbreathed, and the earth untrodden. All things share this childlike loneliness, the grey whispering reeds, the fir trees that make these forests, even the brisk touch of the clear water as you dive.

Brooke was to reflect on the lake again as he travelled through the Rockies. There he referred to the "strangeness" in the George Lake wood, and the charm and terror of the wild: charm, because of its beauty and apparent innocence, and terror, because the lake is a solitude unsullied by history and familiarity.

The lake is still lonely, close as it is to the city of Winnipeg. In the 77 years since Brooke's visit only six more cabins have been built in the area despite many waves of the back-to-nature movement. Otherwise the only changes to the landscape are the presence of the ever-convenient power boat and the tracks of powered recreational vehicles on the portage that Brooke followed to the lake. Government regulation which keeps the area as backcountry, and the inaccessible location have preserved the lake Brooke knew.

Brooke found Canada wanting in history and traditions: he found "no dryads" in the great woods and "no ghosts of lovers" to comfort him. He did, however, capture in his George Lake writing something older than history and folklore: he found something of the primeval wild, the "floor of a new wood", yet present.

Brooke went on to complete his tour of Canada, and on to the United States and the South Seas. In 1914 he returned to England and entered the Armageddon of the Great War. He died 23 April 1915 and was buried on the Greek Island of Skiros. Rupert Brooke left his distinctive patriotic attitude imprinted on those who followed him in war and something of his own rich spirit at George Lake. ♦

Ronald L. Olesky is a Winnipeg writer.

"The clearest and sweetest of blue water" at George Lake (top of page 10). George Lake and the Whiteshell area (bottom of page 10).

Revillon Man

The Northern Career of A. Wallace Laird, 1924 - 1931

By R.H. COCKBURN

I was fortunate to be in the North, and in the fur trade, during a time when the way of life had changed little from the old days. The Indians, Cree and Chipewyan, and the Eskimos, were hunters, semi-nomads, and, as P.G. Downes wrote, "we were the askers, and they, the givers." A unique way of life for all of us, white and native, is gone. I have been back a few times, and the changes sadden me.
—A. Wallace Laird

The lives of Hudson's Bay Company traders of the early decades of this century have been made known to us through a handful of published memoirs, travellers' books, and, since 1920, features in this magazine, but few accounts of those men who served with Revillon Frères Trading Company Ltd. have appeared in print. This article, which was suggested by correspondence between the writer and A. Wallace Laird, is both a salute to a man whose experiences in the dying years of the old fur trade warrant commemoration and an attempt to convey something of the trading practices and atmosphere of that time in the country reaching from the Churchill River to the rim of the Barrens. It is intended also as a tribute, however inadequate, to a species of men — far northern trappers and outpostmen — whose imprint on our collective memory has all but disappeared.

Given the lives they led in that water-laced wilderness, their obscurity is understandable. The very characteristics that defined them made them outcasts: a passion for far places; a capacity for learning the speech and emulating the ways of the natives with whom they competed, traded, and travelled, and with whose women they often enough lived; self-reliance that strains belief; and a defiant, spirited independence. Ingenuity and inherent skills that in the south would have been tuned to mundane crafts or trades they devoted to fire-building, axe work, dog handling, route finding, paddling, packing, hunting, and the art of trapping. Long, testing journeys of the sort described in books by travellers from "outside" were to them matters of routine; by canoe and with dogs, in some cases for decades, these men — Canadians, Scandinavians, Scotsmen, Englishmen, Americans, Germans — undertook gruelling trips that only they knew of. Physically, they were extraordinary — fitter and tougher than professional athletes. Yet in their time, other than in these pages or in third-rate fiction, they received little recognition or acclaim. Gone also these forty years and more is the existence from which they so largely fashioned their own, the centuries-old hunting and trapping life traditional to the Indians and Eskimos whom Wallace Laird remembers so admiringly. "There is hardly anyone left now from those days," he writes, "so I have to rely on my memory and photographs to recall places, names, and dates." That M. Laird's potency of recall is impressive indeed should soon become abundantly evident.

Revillon Frères, of Paris, entered competition against the Hudson's Bay Company by creating posts on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence and at North West

River, Labrador, in 1902; by 1905 they had begun to move into the Churchill River country, and from then until being taken over by the HBC in 1936, they were the Company's fiercest rivals in northern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. "The French Company" recruited in Scotland, as did the HBC, but from Dundee instead of Aberdeen. There, early in 1924, A. Wallace Laird, like so many young Scotsmen before him, pledged himself to cross the Western Ocean and serve the fur trade in Canada's North.

Born in Coupar Angus, Perthshire, Laird jettisoned a boring civil service job to join Revillon. "We came out on a three-year contract, starting at $40 a month, all found; the HBC apprentices signed a five-year contract, starting at $20 a month." Sailing to Canada in April, Laird was posted to Stanley, Saskatchewan, where he served his apprenticeship under H.S.M. Kemp, and counted himself fortunate to have done so. "Harold Kemp, in his memoir *Northern Trader* [1957], describes life and conditions at Stanley and in the Churchill River country perfectly. He was a good canoeman and packer, and in spite of an old foot injury, did well on the trail in winter. Much of what I learned about the fur trade — and the Indians — I owe to him. He was a very fluent Cree speaker. He could, and did, dominate a conversation, particularly with a group of Crees, much as Father Egenolf [whom Laird would meet in Brochet] could do with the Chips." Laird's debut to northern travel was a rough canoe trip with Kemp down the Montreal River to La Ronge. Once at Stanley, Laird found that the rivalry between the two companies there was bitter: "We never saw or spoke to the HBC men — and they never visited us. The two posts were on opposite shores of the Churchill and about half a mile apart. We called ourselves 'Reveeyons'; the HBC and others called us 'The French

Elsie and Harold Kemp, Stanley, 1925. All black and white photographs are from the collection of A. Wallace Laird.

Company or 'Revillions;' to the Crees we were 'Tustowichuk' — that is, the people between them and the 'Companiwuk', the HBC."

Laird's first year, as clerk, was devoted in the main to coming to terms with Revillon's bookkeeping system, studying the Cree language, and learning how to set and pull up fish nets and how to handle a canoe. Many a fur trade apprentice had no opportunity, or desire, to go out on the trail. But thanks to Kemp, Laird "had barely mastered the art of getting in and

Holy Trinity Church, Stanley, as seen from the Revillon Frères house; the Hudson's Bay Company post is across the Churchill.

out of a canoe when I was sent, with an Indian, to get the last mail before freeze-up from La Ronge. That meant packing over the Four Portage route toward La Ronge and paddling about 30 miles to the Post — in one day. That is when I became used to, if not proficient at, the alternate paddling strokes of the Northern Indian." Laird was also broken in to dog travel during that first winter, when, on snowshoes, running ahead of the dogs, finding or breaking trail, he acted as "foregoer" to two teams being sent to Revillon's camp trader on Burntwood Lake, north of Stanley.

Although located on the Churchill, once the great waterway to the Northwest, Stanley had long since come to be off the beaten track. During Laird's time there, "except for the annual arrivals of the Treaty Party, the freight swings, and the District Manager, I can recall only two visitors — an RCMP patrol from Pelican Narrows, and an overnight stay by C.S. MacDonald of the Topographical Survey of Canada." In years to come, Laird was brought to realize that "trading in the Stanley country was so much different in every way from that at any other post or area I was in. When I talked with the men who traded at La Ronge, even, and later those at Ile à la Crosse and La Loche, theirs sounded almost like a different life among a different race of people. I now realize my good fortune in having been posted to Stanley, with its Indian way of life, and with Kemp as an active fur trader, not one who spent all his time behind the counter or the office desk. Those years gave me a lasting admiration and respect for the Crees I traded and travelled with."

The early fall of 1925 found Laird, with four canoes of freight and seven Indians, supplying a new outpost at Pipe Portage, three days north of Stanley. Before freeze-up he returned there by canoe for the winter, travelling with a family of Crees. In the new year, curious to see Reindeer Lake, Laird took a brief vacation and followed the HBC's winter horse freighting trail to South End, where the Company's small post served as a depot for Brochet, far to the north. The young Englishman in charge of this backwater "was very glad to have some company — even from the horrible opposition." Laird's visit coincided with the dramatic, steaming arrival of the freight "swing" from Prince Albert, by way of Lac La Ronge. The tons of supplies brought in over this horse-ploughed route would be transported to Brochet by schooner after open water, by which time Laird was on the trail again. The fall of 1926 saw him canoeing up the Churchill to establish a new outpost at Snake Lake; unlike today's fly-in canoe trippers and thrill-seekers, the men who made their livings in that country had to be as adept in laborious upriver work as in downriver travel. In the spring of 1927, his apprenticeship served, Laird went on furlough to Scotland. Upon his return that autumn he was posted, as assistant manager, to Pelican Narrows.

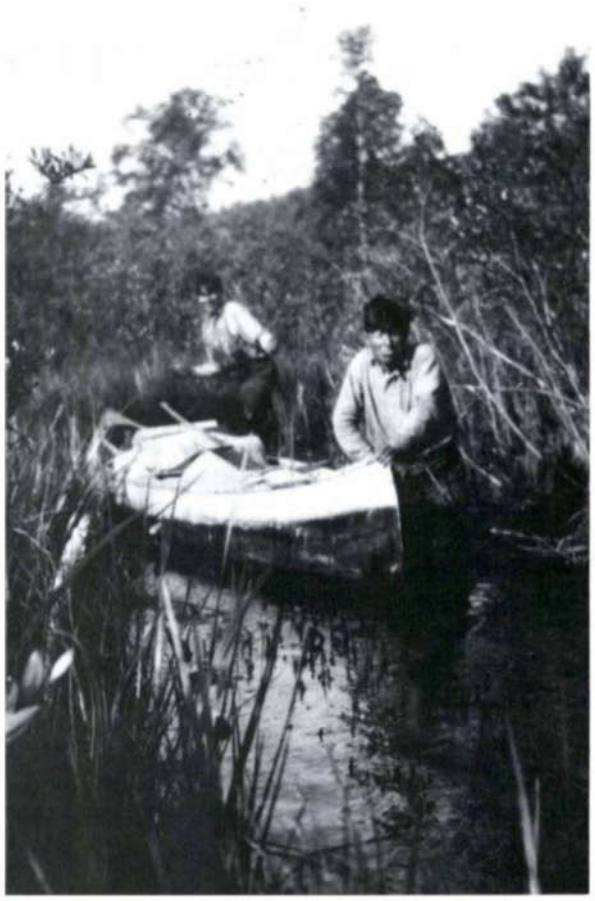
The manager at Pelican — of whom more will be heard — was Murdo MacLean, "a devious, morose, and, when he could get it, hard-drinking Hebridean from Benebecula." He proved abrasive company for the young man from Perthshire, who soon learned "that few post managers wanted an assistant, regardless of

Stanley: "Kemp's youngest son with furs".

his title, stationed at the main post. Conflicts of personalities aside, there were various reasons for this, some determined by Head Office, such as debt [to Indians] being issued contrary to instructions or even because he might receive visits from native girlfriends. The question of debt, or 'the hip-pocket ledger', has been explained very well by Harold Kemp, who wrote that 'something like this was necessary if one were to stay in business at all. In short, the hip-pocket ledger was a little black book that held secrets shared only by the individual trader and his conscience. In it went all the goods given out on credit — the tea and the sugar, the tobacco and the ammunition . . . the socks and the underwear, the dress goods and all the other items that a family would need in a trapping camp. The hip-pocket ledger was responsible for more sleepless nights and digestive troubles than all other trading worries combined. And for a reason that is evidently simple. If the Indian turned dishonest, or for any cause was unable to settle his account, there would be a gaping hole in the post inventory.'"

That winter Laird, relieved to escape MacLean's grim habits, was sent out on several tripping ventures with a local Cree and favourite companion, Henry Linklater. Later, still by dog team, the two spring-traded to the south, at Deschambault Lake, where Laird was sent for the muskrat hunt. He and Linklater "rented the upstairs loft of a large cabin belonging to the Ballantyne family, where we kept our trade goods. However, soon after we arrived, the HBC gave the Cree owner a camp trade outfit on the lower floor! Score: HBC 1, Revillon 0. I might add that I was never at a Revillon post that showed a profit. The cost of goods was so high then that a generous mark-up was still not sufficient to keep the posts out of the red."

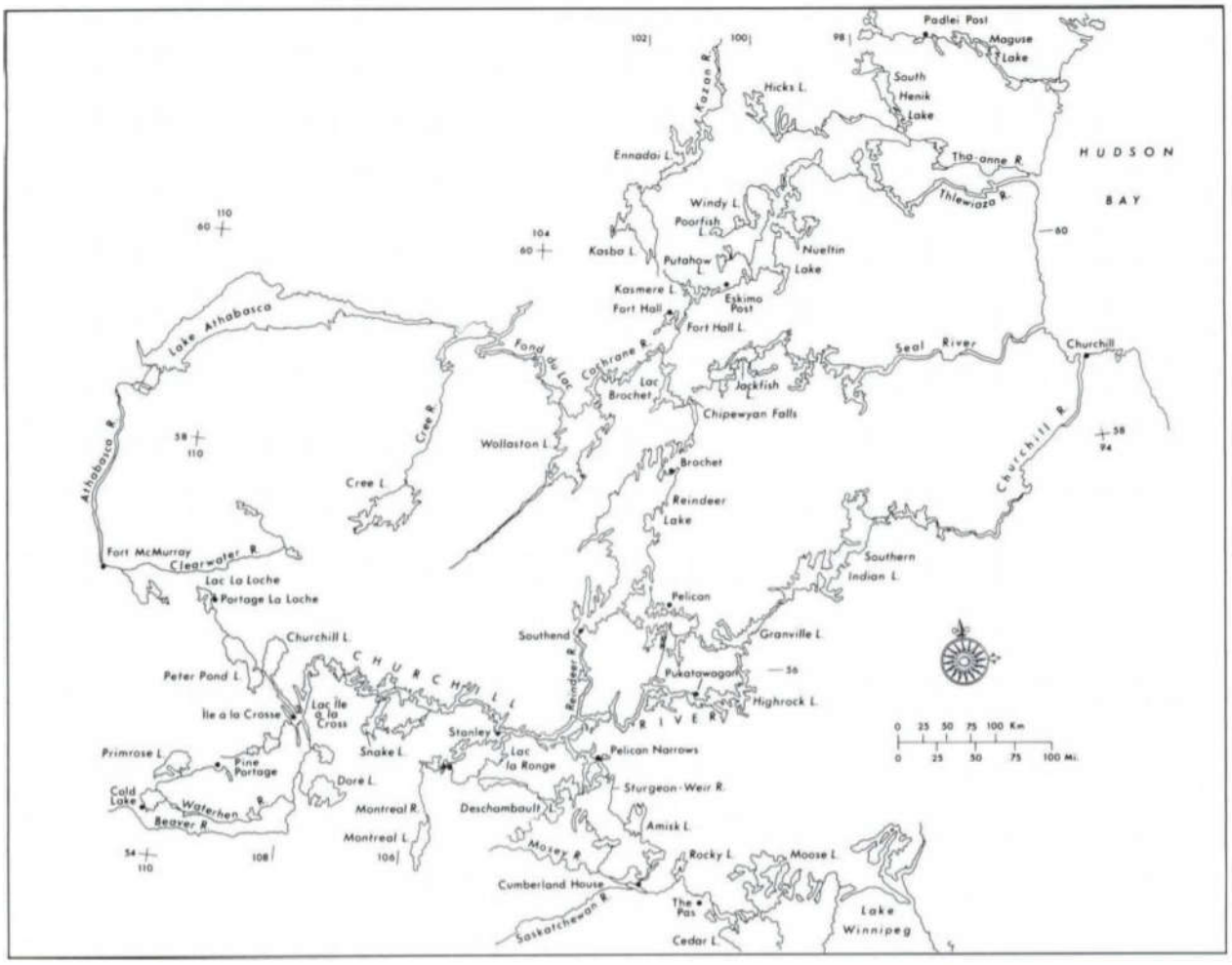
Canoeing back to Pelican after break-up, Laird found MacLean about to depart for Brochet to take over as manager there, and himself in temporary charge of the post. "In addition to us and the HBC, there was the free trader Arthur Jan, an RCMP detachment, a Saskatchewan Game Department officer, the Oblate missionary, and, for the summer, an Anglican Church school teacher. With the exception of Jan, it was a bachelor community, and a very friendly one, with a fair amount of socializing — quite a change of atmosphere from Stanley. As well, during that summer of '28, we had stationed there RCAF air-mapping crews and Topographical Survey of Canada men with three planes — two Vickers Vedettes and a Vickers Viking. The Chief Geographer told us that they would name lakes after all the fur traders in the area, and so they did. All in all, summer 1928 was a pleasant time at Pelican." Pleasant enough, but monotonous. Music helped to pass the time. A piper, Laird carried his instrument wherever he went, and at Pelican, as elsewhere, he found appreciative audiences. "The Crees



"Hard going", north of Stanley.

preferred quicksteps and jigs, to which they kept time as they did to their Red River dances." Eventually, he would discover that the Chipewyans favoured slow airs — "The Battle is O'er", "The Skye Boat Song" — and, given the differing natures of these peoples, he found some significance in their choices. But not even pipe music could sufficiently beguile what was an adventureless routine, and Laird put in for a transfer to someplace farther north. In September, his request having been granted, he was relieved by John Forrest from Pukatawagan. So began the most exhilarating and memorable experiences of his trading years.

Laird was bound for Revillon's remote Maria Lake outpost, near the headwaters of the North Seal River, in northwestern Manitoba. The leaves were on the turn when he set off in a 4-horsepowered freight canoe, accompanied by Angus Sewap, a Pelican Narrows Cree who was to stay with him at Maria and who, having previously spent a winter in the Nueltin Lake country, "had a smattering of Chipewyan and Eskimo". The first day's travel brought them to Frog Portage. A week or so earlier, returning from a trip to La Ronge,



Wallace Laird and Bob Hyslop, Pukatawagan, 1930.

Packing, Pipe Portage Outpost, 1926; Wallace Laird (left) and Joel MacKenzie.

and crossing this famous carry, Laird had run into the D.M. Burden Expedition from the American Museum of Natural History. Headed by Colonel Ilia Tolstoy, who had been a cavalry officer under the Czar and who in years to come would journey in Tibet, this group of four white men and six Cumberland House Crees were canoeing to Windy Lake, N.W.T., to film the Barren Land caribou migration as part of a documentary film to be titled *The Silent Enemy*. As we shall see, Laird would meet them again before the year was out. Several days later, following the 170-mile canoe route up Reindeer Lake, he and Sewap came upon a windbound prospector, Tommy Saville, an Englishman and former naval cadet who had chosen to go to sea in the North rather than with the Royal Navy; "by lashing his small canoe to our large one, catamaran style, we were better able to negotiate the great, rolling swells on Reindeer."

Brochet, which had been founded as a provision post by the HBC in 1859 at the northeastern extremity of Reindeer Lake, was a straggling settlement of log structures, shacks, and canvas tents overseen by the squat steeple of the Oblates' St. Peter's Mission Church. Nearby was the mouth of the Cochrane River, the way to the nearly unmapped interior beyond. Nearly unmapped, perhaps, but by now well-travelled country. Its main trade route had been determined by Herbert Hall of the HBC between 1906 and 1908 when he established three posts: Fort Hall outpost, on the largest and most northerly of the chain of lakes that lie between the Cochrane and Kasmere Lake; a freight depot known as Canoe Limit, or Husky Portage, on Putahow Lake; and, much farther to the north, Eskimo Post, at Ennadai Lake on the Kazan River. Thus were the Caribou Eskimos introduced in a major way to the enticements of trade. These people had, since the 1870s, sometimes ventured as far south as Brochet, both to trade and to refresh their ties with the Oblates, but such visits came to an end when in 1926 the Company created Padlei Post, to which they then resorted, on the Maguse River, N.W.T. All this was sparsely populated, fur-rich territory. Drawn by its remoteness, its promise, and their own sanguine natures, a small legion of white trappers had moved into it at the end of the 1914-18 War. The most enterprising of them operated from Windy Lake and its environs, west of Nueltin. Spurred by rising fur prices, Revillon opened a post on south Nueltin in 1922, which it soon shifted north to the Windy country, where free traders, the HBC, and Simons Ltd. followed. By the late 1920s, then, the rivers, lakes, and portages and the winter trails of this enormous region lying between Reindeer Lake and the Barrens were as frequented by white travellers as they had been since time out of mind by the *Idthen-eldeli*, the Caribou-eater Chipewyans.

From Brochet, Laird's small freight brigade — himself and Sewap in one canoe, four Chipewyans in the other two — poled and paddled up the Cochrane, leaving it below Chipewyan Falls to take the "Maria Lake Trail", the only route in, and one demanding steady portaging. "I think," Laird recalls, "for a non-native to become proficient in paddling a canoe, poling up rapids, mastering the technique of the tumpline, and trotting over mosquito-infested portages took more

The Revillon establishment at Pelican Narrows.

mental and physical toughness than winter travel. Competing with Indians as to who could get the loads across first — and then dog-trotting back to get another load [150 pounds for Laird, 200 to 380 for the native packers], while the sweat poured down and the mosquitos feasted, was not heaven on earth." But there were no flies this time; shell ice rimmed the small lakes of the trail in the mornings. Once reached, the outpost, an old Chipewyan campsite, was, Laird found, remarkably exposed. When he asked Louis Naygli — "One-Eyed Louis" — why all the trees around had been cut down, the explanation was that this had been done to enable them, the Chipewyans, to have an unobstructed look-out for the caribou. The outpost was never visited by the Caribou Eskimos; it existed solely for the purpose of trading with the *Edthen-eldeli* and a few white trappers. Laird replaced Howard Cochrane, "an educated mixed blood," who, like most outpostmen, was a skilled trapper.

Laird, as he had come to do by now, looked forward to winter. "In the Churchill country, after the fish had been caught [for dog food] and hung to dry and freeze, freeze-up was anxiously awaited. Crossing on rubber ice with the dogs at a gallop to keep from breaking through. Travelling hard and fast to get the first furs (and to get some debts paid off). The welcome at the Indian camps. The relaxation back at the outpost after a trip, getting cleaned and shaved, and accounts added up. At Maria, after a day's rest for the dogs, hauling in a load of caribou. Actually, not much to do, in a way, but it was surprising how time went, and I enjoyed it all and am glad I saw it all and was part of a way of life that was slowly disappearing." These first cold months were also spent gaining a rudimentary understanding of the guttural Chipewyan tongue.

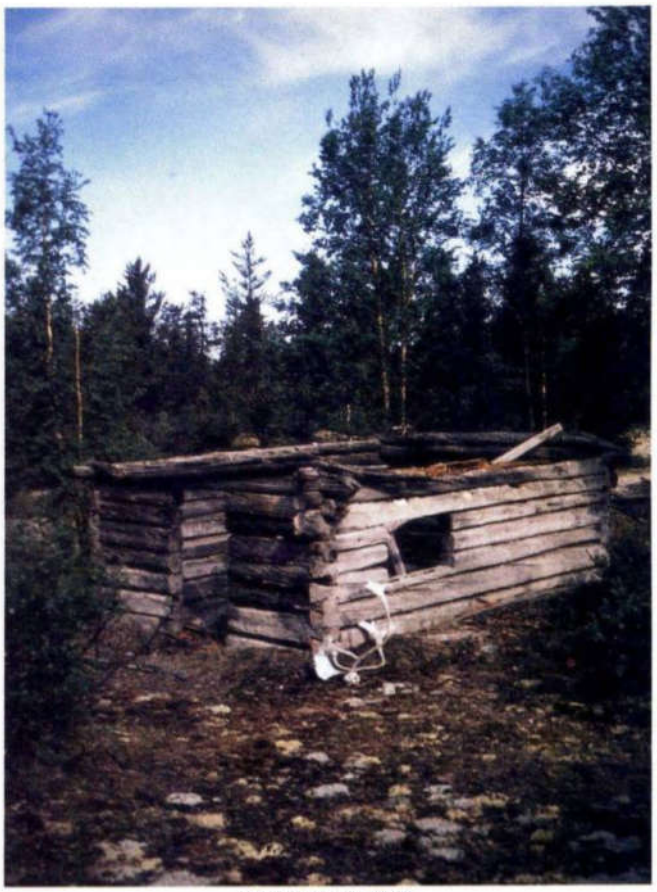
One of Laird's trips, with Louis Naygli, took him by way of Jackfish Lake to the south end of Nueltin, where he traded with the trapping team of Swanson and Varnson. Some such trappers — Cochrane being an example — worked sporadically as outpostmen for the trading companies, but most remained resolutely independent. The exemplar of this latter breed was the redoubtable Ragnar Jonsson, a Swede who trapped east of Reindeer from the early 1920s until 1938, when he headed north for Nueltin and made the upper reaches of the Seal, Wolverine, and Caribou rivers his trapping grounds. He continued to live alone in that country until the winter of 1983-84 when, at the age of 84, his great strength finally gave out. He died in The Pas in 1988, leaving no record but an oral one of his epic travels, solitary perseverance, and matchless knowledge of the wilderness.

Before Christmas, Laird, with Naygli and two other Chipewyans, departed Maria with four dog teams, his intention being to try to locate, and trade with, a company of Barren Land Chipewyans believed to be somewhere near Kasba Lake, an estimated six days' travel to the northwest. "We had no maps in those days. All our information came from the natives, and usually referred only to lakes and rivers or the winter

trade and travel routes." Laird had found winter trail food in the Churchill country unappetizing: "Waking up outdoors at 40° below to face a breakfast of bannock, bacon, and beans was not a joyful occasion." Now, in the caribou country, pemmican provided a welcome change: "Before going on a trip, caribou steak would be ground up, and a little flour and melted fat would be mixed in; then it was shaped into moulds that would fit into the fry pan, and frozen. This, heated up, with lots of fat, and bannock, made a good meal. Just as it did in the cabin — we were always ready for another pan full, three times a day — nothing but meat and bannock, we thrived on it."

On the fourth day out, harness bells removed to avoid spooking any caribou met on the way, they pulled in to Revillon's Kasmere — or, as it tended to be pronounced, "Cashmere" — Post, situated at the head of the portage from Fort Hall Lake to Kasmere Lake. Snug and well built, with "an excellent model of an Eskimo kayak, about four feet long, on one wall," the post was inviting. In these last few years of its service it was being used only as a way depot for goods unloaded from Brochet, which were collected and transported by Eskimos and their dogs to Revillon's Windy River Post. Laird "liberated a good pair of Eskimo sealskin overpants" to replace his shedding caribou ones. The next morning, continuing north across Kasmere Lake, Laird and his men sighted, in the white distance, teams and travellers coming their way. The unexpected party — one can imagine an Arthur Heming painting of the scene — was none other than the Burden Expedition, heading for the outside. Tolstoy explained how, after encountering Laird on Frog Portage months before, they had made good time to Brochet and had succeeded in canoeing on to Windy Lake before freeze-up — a stiff voyage. There they were billeted at the Revillon Post. But disappointment awaited them, for the caribou, always unpredictable, failed to come within range of their cameras. Staying on was pointless. To make their escape, Tolstoy had purchased dogs and equipment, "mostly from Chips", but now, crossing Kasmere, they were overloaded and making slow time. George Yandle, "a German-American who by all accounts had been north of Brochet for some years and was part of the Husky Harris-Windy Smith-Alfred Peterson group who trapped in the Nueltin-Windy region" was with the Tolstoy party. Upon learning that the caribou had gone missing and that no one knew the whereabouts of the Kasba hunters, Laird decided to turn about and travel to Brochet with Tolstoy, who offered to hire one of his teams once the sled was unloaded back at Kasmere Post. So it was that Laird spent Christmas at Brochet instead of on the edge of the Barrens.

The Christmas season brought other hard, frost-scarred men in from far-flung outposts and trapping



Allan Meadows photograph

Kasmere Post, 1987.

grounds, among them Bill MacKenzie, a native of Stornoway in the Isle of Lewis, "a tough old man who trapped at Windy and always drove a team of excellent dogs." He and his fellow Hebridean, the morose MacLean, now the French Company's manager at Brochet, spent the days and nights conversing in Gaelic. Other celebrants included Jim Cumines, formerly HBC manager at Brochet and now a Simons Ltd. trader, Angus Millar of the HBC, one-legged Frank Henderson of Revillon, Simons trader Alfred Peterson from Windy, and Syd Keighley, the HBC outpostman from Poor Fish Lake, also some 300 travel miles to the north. Present too was Father Joseph Egenolf, priest of the Oblate Mission at Brochet, where he had served since 1905. Fluent in the strangulating Chipewyan tongue, much respected, and remembered fondly by travellers from the south, this good man "was notorious, even among the Indians, for ill-treatment of dogs. He had the habit of lying in his carriole and hurling a snowshoe, which he'd rigged to the sled on a long thong, at the dogs, then retrieving it as he drove along. Frank Henderson told me that when the two bands of Chipewyans [the Barren Land and Hatchet Lake bands] came in after break-up, Egenolf would allow

R. Glenn Madill photograph

Combined Revillon Frères and Dominion Observatory Magnetic Survey expedition, south Nueltin Lake, 1922. Del Simons stands in the centre; R. Glenn Madill, D.O.M.S. leader, stands second from left; Alfred Peterson, in undershirt, kneels and grins. The Cree canoemen and packers have long since taken to wearing white man's clothes.

them a few days to visit, and commingle, as it were. Then, after a certain date, after dark he would issue forth with a flashlight and a dog whip, and woe betide any young buck found in a tent or tepee where he shouldn't be."

After a week of rest, celebration, and conversation, and a 300-mile trip with Henry Linklater to Rabbit River and back, Laird returned to Maria Lake. Yandle drove on south to Cumberland House with the Burden Expedition, of which, regrettably, no written record exists. Easter found both men back at Brochet, where Yandle arrived from the air with the mail and the inimitable Del Simons, a man whose personality and exploits call for a digression from our main narrative.

Simons, a native of Ogdensburg, New York, was both a big man physically and a larger-than-life figure in that country. According to the traveller P.G. Downes, Simons "was one of those very rare whites that the Indians really liked as a person .... I remember a Pelican Narrows Indian telling me, for instance, that Del could *eat more* than he could. He used to gamble with them a lot in a game that requires great skill, and beat them at it. This is a game in which you have ten 'knuckle' bones of a caribou on a sling with a long bone needle attached, and you throw it up into the air and spear the bones." Simons, who had begun his trading career with the French Company before the Great War in the Ile à la Crosse country, established Revillon's first post on Nueltin Lake, at the mouth of the Putahow River, in 1922. In 1926 he accompanied and guided Captain Thierry Mallet, Revillon's Chief Inspector, on a canoe trip to the Kazan River, a venture described somewhat disingenuously by Mallet in *The Beaver* (March 1950). Their canoemen, Peter Linklater and Joe Cadotte, were Cumberland House Crees. Because it is Mallet, not Simons, who is remembered by adventurers nowadays, the following anecdote, which was told Downes by Dominion Observatory surveyor R. Glenn Madill, who got it from Simons, deserves to be recorded. "While going down the Kazan, which is a rough river with some long, bad rapids, the Indians would in each case stop and reconnoitre the rapids, and frequently preferred lining down rather than running them. This was good sense, but it became very annoying to Mallet, for the lining process is a slow one. Mallet began heckling the rest with the complaint, 'Oh, if only my Naskapis were here, we would go right through these and not have all this damned fussing.' Revillon had posts in Ungava and Mallet was referring to Indian canoemen there. Finally Simons became thoroughly annoyed and told Peter that they would run the next rapid regardless of everything. They

Windy Lake Post, 1929 (above) and (below) the cold comforts of Maria Lake Outpost in the winter of 1928-1929.

Wallace Laird with Atomogooloo, Windy Lake, 1929.

did so, and it turned out to be a particularly long and nasty one, with more than ordinary danger to everyone. In the midst of the general hell of water, Mallet broke down completely and began to cry out wildly, finally yelling almost hysterically to Simons, 'Del, for Christ's sake, what will we do? We're done for!' Simons yelled back, 'Call for your god-damned Naskapis!' "

By the time of our narrative, the enterprising Simons had created his own trading company, with posts at Rabbit River, Brochet, and Windy River, and was making heavy inroads upon the trade of both the HBC and Revillon Frères. Not only did Simons pay more for his furs, he also chartered an aeroplane to take them out. Now Simons had flown in to Brochet with, Laird recollects, "quite a few tins of o.p. alcohol; he held court in Jim Cumines' house. Frank Henderson and I went over and were royally treated by Del, even though we were opposition. Del was running some kind of a scam in timber wolves. There was a bounty on wolves in either Saskatchewan, Manitoba, or the N.W.T., and Del was buying up all the wolves, mainly from the white trappers, and claiming the bounty from the jurisdiction that authorized it. I knew about Del from Harold Kemp. Del's reputation as a traveller, as well as an inspector [with Revillon] had gone up proportionally as that of the HBC Inspector at that time [during the middle '20s] went down; he was the notorious Philip Godsell, despised, and almost hated, by the HBC men. Harold and I met him on a steep uphill portage south of Reindeer one winter and were appalled at the 'Lord of the North' way he travelled, reclining in his sleeping robe in his carriole. Thinking back to the eighteen full-time Revillon and HBC traders I met or knew of over those years — at Montreal Lake, Lac La Ronge, Stanley, Pelican Narrows, Brochet, Pukatawagan — there were, other than Del, only four who could be classed as northern travellers, that is, men who paddled a freight canoe and packed across a portage in summer, snowshoed and drove a dog team in winter: Harold Kemp, Syd Keighley, John Forrest, and Fred Schweder. The others travelled as passengers on their infrequent trips."

Yandle, upon his arrival with Simons, brought momentous news: orders from Revillon's District Office in Prince Albert that Laird was to accompany him to Windy, where Laird was to fire Ole Buckholtz, the trapper-trader in charge of the post there, whom Yandle would replace. "Revillon had found out that Ole, economically seduced by Alf Peterson, had invested money with Simons, and they feared that prime furs would be diverted to Del's operation. Peterson, of Simons Ltd., was in at Brochet, as was Syd Keighley of the HBC. There had been a heavy snowfall, so we all decided to travel together. I had three toboggans (and two Crees from Brochet who wanted to see Eskimos), Peterson and Keighley one each. I think it took us eleven days to Windy. We left part of our loads at Cashmere, and, a day or two north of there, Keighley left us to follow the trail to his outpost at Poor Fish Lake, which lies west of Windy. At our last camp before Windy, Peterson was somewhere behind, but before dawn we woke up to see Alfred driving past, obviously in the hope that he would get to Buckholtz ahead of us. I left once we'd eaten: George was to come along with the Crees while I chased Alfred. I had only a general idea as to the trail, but I had George's 'king' dog, Tigli, as my leader, and he knew he was on his way home. To make a long story, and chase, short, I caught up with Peterson about three hours later, and we landed below the Post in a dead heat — and met Ole and his brother, Carl, together outside the cabin. Ole was upset about being turfed out of a job — and house and home — and after Alfred's bottle of rum had made the rounds, he vented his frustration by taking a swipe at the stovepipes,

which came crashing to the floor. After handing over to me, he and his brother moved down to the Simons Post, on Simons Lake. I would have liked to stay longer at Windy, where I loved the sound of the wolves calling, and hearing the sled dogs join in, but I had to get back to Brochet."

With two Caribou Eskimos, Laird and his Crees — who had got their wish — returned to Kasmere Post, where the Ahiramuit collected the freight that had been left there, loaded their komatiks, and headed back to the Barrens.

At Brochet, Laird was instructed by MacLean to proceed immediately to Pelican Narrows to relieve John Forrest, who was to go on furlough to Scotland after open water. Before we follow Laird, a further word about MacLean: Post managers, even as late as the 1930s, enjoyed absolute command of their men, and the more isolated the post, the more ironclad their powers were. Most, like Kemp, were both able and humane. But a few, unfit for their responsibilities to begin with, or overcome by psychotic flaws once in charge of their distant fiefdoms, became petty tyrants. MacLean was such a personality. At Brochet, Revillon's mainstay with the Chipewyans, whose language he spoke, was Frank Henderson, an Edinburgh man. He had served Revillon loyally since 1915, but that did not save him from MacLean. In 1931, "MacLean, jealous of Frank's influence with the natives, banished him, one-legged and all, to Maria Lake. It was an incredibly sadistic act. It must have been hell for him on those portages; he could not go on the trail, or far from the cabin." Henderson rode out his unpleasantness, returned to Brochet, and, when Revillon Frères was absorbed by the HBC in 1936, stayed on there in the employ of his onetime enemy.

By that time, the trapping and trading fever in which Laird had played his small but dramatic role had ebbed; as Downes was to write in his book *Sleeping Island*, "costly rivalry, falling fur prices, mismanagement, incompetent personnel, and a total disregard for expense combined with the great and arduous distances" had done for the Company's opposition. When, in 1939, he canoed from Brochet to Windy, Downes found the trade routes abandoned, Kasmere Post falling to ruin, and, far to the north, the Simons Ltd. Post empty and forlorn. The only active post remaining, the HBC's "Nueltin Lake Post", situated on what had been the Revillon site at the confluence of the Red and Windy rivers, was by then supplied, once a year, by plane.

Taking to the trail again, Laird had to leave his personal kit at Maria, whence it would follow him to Pelican Narrows after open water. Henry Linklater again travelled with him down Reindeer Lake to Rabbit River, where Revillon kept a freight depot. "Dog-driving", Laird observes, "was more of an individual

Frank Henderson, Wallace Laird and companion, Brochet, 1929.

effort than canoeing. Much depended, first, on the dogs, then the loads, the weather, and the trail conditions. One had to be fit — there was very little riding on the toboggans in the fur trade. Generally speaking, we expected to make about 40 miles a day, and did so this time; but for two days on that earlier trip down Reindeer with Henry, after Christmas, trail conditions were so heavy that we only made some 10 miles a day; when we stopped for the night we could look back and see the smoke from our previous camp still rising straight up into the air." From Rabbit River, Laird went on alone. "Spring was coming to the Churchill country, and some of the portages were getting bare of snow by the time I reached Pelican. I never saw any of the Brochet or Windy people again."

Upon Forrest's return early that fall, Laird was posted to Pukatawagan, "The Place of the Fishing", on the Manitoba waters of the Churchill. At this picturesque post, as at Stanley, "there was *no* contact between the employees of Revillon and those of the HBC. I think it was partly because the posts were located across the Churchill from each other, whereas at Pelican and Brochet they were within easy walking distance, which made for comparatively friendly relations. But always, competition was fierce." Keeping it so here were the managers, Bob Hyslop of Revillon

Revillon's Highrock Lake Outpost, 1930.

and Jack Denton of the HBC. Hyslop, a Scottish Borderer from Langholm, "swam every day in the river — in the winter through a hole in the ice, with a supporting bar to hang on to." Before freeze-up, accompanied by a white trapper and a Revillon apprentice, Laird took an outfit by canoe down to Highrock Lake where he opened an outpost. When the snows came he travelled north to Pickerel Narrows, Granville Lake, where Revillon had a small camp trader, as did the HBC. Pickerel Narrows had been the site of a North West Company post, the chimney of which "was still standing strong, long after the logs had disintegrated into the forest floor". Laird returned to Highrock, where he stayed the winter, tripping for furs in what proved to be a poor season.

Directly after open water, heading upriver toward Pukatawagan and approaching the portage nearest the Post, Laird "passed a canoe containing two strange white men, heading down the Churchill. When I got to the Post, I found Bob Hyslop in bad shape. One of the men I'd seen was Curly Durant, a noted bootlegger from The Pas, which was still very much a frontier town. He and his partner had stayed the night at Revillon, filled Bob full of whisky, taken his keys, and stolen a bundle of assorted furs from the loft in the store. Mostly foxes — but one mink. Here, I'll backtrack: After Christmas I had come in to drive Bob to Cold Lake, ostensibly to have a tooth pulled, but really for 'rest and relaxation'. As I was hooking up the dogs an Indian came in with a mink skin. I traded for it, and to save time wrote his name on the underside of the skin with an indelible pencil, then off we went. Back now to the Post. While I was easing Bob out of his hangover, who should appear but Bob Crowe, of the Island Falls RCMP detachment, on patrol! With him was a native special constable who knew the Churchill River. We left in hot pursuit, in Crowe's motorized canoe, and late in the day came upon Durant's canoe tied up at a point on a river expansion below Highrock Lake; he and his partner were across the point, checking the wind and waves. We located the stolen furs, including the mink. Because criminal law was enforced by the Manitoba Provincial Police, all Bob could do was seize the furs and take statements from the two thieves. Then we returned upriver and camped at the outpost for the night. In due course Bob handed the matter over to the M.P. Police. A trial was held in late summer before a judge whose reputation on the bench, we were told, was not one of unquestioned impartiality. Both men were acquitted — but the furs were returned to Revillon. An unconventional decision, to say the least."

The summer and fall of 1930, which saw Laird often on the trail, passed without further excitement. Then, just before Christmas, he received instructions to proceed northwest to Rabbit River to relieve Fred Schweder, Revillon's depot trader there, "who had to appear in Police Court in The Pas to answer a charge of being in possession of illegal beaver. He'd been caught by the Mounted Policeman patrolling Reindeer —

Marcel Chappuis, if memory serves — who must have been tipped off. The trip was a disaster. I was told it would take four days. Because nearly all of the natives in for Christmas had left for the bright lights of Cold Lake, the only guide I could get was a young Cree who claimed, falsely, that he had once been over the trail. By the fourth day we were lost, wandering around a large lake which I later learned was Kamuchawie. We were out of grub and dog food, and it was snowing heavily. Eventually we found a faint toboggan trail that led to a small lake, at the end of which was a trapper's cabin: the license I found inside read 'Jack Labelle'. His cupboard was bare. However, we spotted a stick of frozen fish on the roof of the cabin. The Indian wanted to boil up the fish, but I felt that the dogs should have it, so we chopped it up and fed it to the eight of them. Then I went back into the cabin. Coming outside a while later, I found three of my dogs and the Indian dead. The fish had been laced with strychnine — it was wolf bait. I started south the next day, with the remaining dogs hauling one toboggan. We had not gone far when we met Labelle, who had been out to Cold Lake, returning with his team. I spent the night with him. The next day we took turns breaking trail through very deep snow in the bush and across lakes, and got to Rabbit River — *Wapus-sipi* — late in the day. Mrs. Schweder, a Cree, cooked us up pans of caribou steaks and fresh bannock — very much appreciated.

"Schweder was gone for a month. While I was there the freight swing came in from Cold Lake, 175 miles to the south — six or seven teams of huge horses leaning into their collars, blowing steam, sleigh bells ringing, the teamsters' beards frosted, some twelve tons of freight: flour, canned goods, dry goods, tumplines, kerosene, gasoline, cases of traps, rifles, ammunition, axes, candles, new canoes. A tremendously impressive spectacle in the midst of that solitude. Yet only a few years later Revillon, who had trading posts in Persia, Siberia, and China, would be gone from the North."

When Schweder got back from The Pas, he came in with his matched team of Eskimo huskies. Smitten by these superb animals, Laird, of whose own dogs only one had survived, induced Schweder to sell them to him. Then he said his good-byes. Harnessing his new dogs — "the best team I ever drove" — in the sub-zero darkness of a January morning, Laird was about to take to the trail on one of his last trips as a Revillon man. In years to come, as a Mounted Policeman, he would once travel 70 miles in a day behind another team; this first stage of his farewell journey from Rabbit River was to be his one other such day, and the memory of it has remained vivid for more than half a century: "The trail of the freight swings was freshly ploughed, and I was carrying no load other than a grub box, sleeping bag, and dog food: we went like the wind."

The team of matched huskies Laird purchased from Fred Schweder at Rabbit River: "the best team I ever drove".

View of the Churchill River from the Revillon Frères post, Pukatawagan. Below: Henry Linklater, "a good man."

A few months later, returning to Pukatawagan from a trading trip in that Depression year of 1931, Laird found the District Manager paying his annual visit. He bore dismal news. There were to be no salary increases; outposts in the Churchill country were to be eliminated in favour of less expensive native camp traders; and there was to be no more tripping for fur. Moreover, rivalry with the HBC, the very essence of Revillon's *esprit de corps,* was to cease and be replaced by co-operation. Unbeknownst to the traders and even the district managers of both organizations, the HBC had bought a controlling interest in Revillon Frères in 1926 and had been secretly operating it as a form of subsidized competition since then; in 1936 Revillon would be bought out by the Company and its trading posts shut down.

So it was that patterns of trade and travel to which Laird had given his heart, and which had seemed timeless, drew to a close. "That had been the life for me: driving dogs, the canoe travel, running outposts, the championship of Indians. It was now evident that, if I stayed, I would end up behind the counter or behind a desk, a mere credit store manager. The old days and the old ways were slowly but surely disappearing, and, having been trained into believing that fur had to be got at all cost and that all opposition, especially the HBC, were unprincipled rogues and liars, I could tell that it would be too hard for me to change direction. It was time to move on."

Within twelve months of his departure from Revillon Frères, Laird was patrolling Prince Albert National Park as the first non-native Royal Canadian Mounted Police special constable in the North. ♦

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Death of a Liberator, 1838

By Lennard Sillanpaa

During the early morning of 12 November 1838, Nils Gustaf von Schoultz crossed into Upper Canada at the head of a 190-man American invasion force. His objectives were liberty, the expulsion of British "tyranny" from North America, and the establishment of a domestic republican form of government for Canadians.

Their landing at a place called Windmill Point, located two kilometres east of the community of Prescott on the upper St. Lawrence River, was to be the launching of a "bloodless liberation" of Upper Canada sponsored by an American group called the Hunters' Society of Onondaga County, New York. In the ensuing five days of fighting between Americans and Canadians, 37 men died and 89 were wounded. This attempted American invasion was an episode in the rebellions of 1837-38.

Less than one month later on 8 December Nils von Schoultz was hanged and buried at Fort Henry in Kingston. Like others before him and since, von Schoultz came to learn that Canadians are different from their American neighbours. On the night before his execution, in a final letter to a friend, he wrote:

> Let no further blood be shed; and believe me, from what I have seen, that all the stories that were told about the sufferings of the Canadian people were untrue.

Nils von Schoultz was a tragic figure whose brief appearance on the stage of Canadian history helped shape the development of this emerging nation. In the days between his capture and execution, he also came to have a significant impact on the political development of a future Canadian prime minister.

Nils Gustaf von Schoultz was born on 7 October 1807 in Kuopio, Finland, the second son of a circuit court judge. In 1808, during the Napoleonic wars, Russian troops crossed the Finnish frontier and his family fled to Sweden.

After the Treaty of Fredrikshamn in 1808 many officials and refugees returned to Finland, but von Schoultz's parents chose to remain in Sweden.

In 1821, the young Nils von Schoultz qualified for the Royal Military Academy in Stockholm where an older brother was already following a military career. By December 1823, von Schoultz was promoted to second lieutenant in the Svea Regiment of Artillery. In November 1830, he received an honourable discharge from the military.

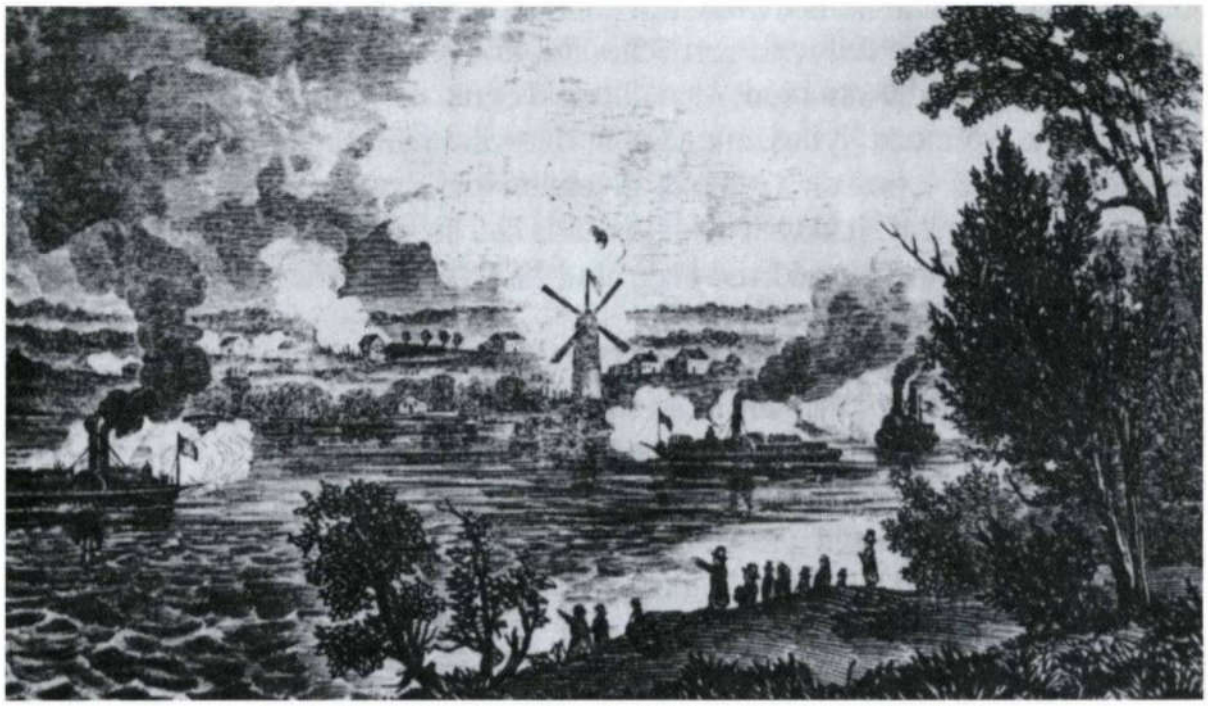
In early 1831 stories from Poland reached Sweden that told of czarist repression and of fierce resistance by students and cadets in Warsaw. Many Swedes decided to assist the Poles against their Russian masters. One of these was von Schoultz who left for Poland in secrecy in 1831 and plunged headlong into the defence of Warsaw.

Von Schoultz later made his way to France where he joined the Foreign Legion in North Africa, moving on, in March of 1833, to join his family in Florence where his sister was studying music.

A year later he married Ann Cordelia Campbell in the English church at Florence. His wife was a member of a well-established Scottish merchant family from Edinburgh. The couple settled in Karlskrona, Sweden, where both their daughters were born.

Von Schoultz tried to settle down to a normal family life as a businessman-inventor but does not seem to have been successful. In June 1836, he visited London on business. His family remained in Sweden. A month later, without telling anyone, he left for the United States.

While he officially gave his nationality as Swedish, von Schoultz began passing himself off as a Pole. He



Americans line the river bank at Ogdensburg, New York, to watch the battle at Windmill Point. The British steamers "Victoria" and "Cobourg" are seen arriving from Kingston with troops aboard.

was known to everyone as a former officer in the Polish Army who had been forced to leave his homeland by Russian oppressors.

Von Schoultz became interested in the salt industry developing around the upstate New York towns of Syracuse and Salina (Salina later merged to become part of Syracuse). He came to have many friends in Salina, which was located near the Canadian border.

In December 1837 authorities in Upper Canada put down an attempted rebellion. Many of the leaders of this uprising fled to the United States where they found sympathetic support for their proposals to liberate Canada from the oppression of British colonial rule.

Throughout 1838, a number of forces operating out of the United States conducted a series of raids and acts of piracy along the Canadian border. Newspapers, local government officials and merchants in the border states led the campaign to "liberate" Canada. Officials in Washington, under the administration of President Martin van Buren, however, were more cautious, so these liberation enthusiasts had to operate under the cloak of secrecy.

One organization that sprang to life in 1838 was the Patriot Hunters which formed hundreds of "Hunters' Lodges" throughout the border states, recruited some 40,000 members and raised tens of thousands of dollars for the purchase of arms.

The Hunters' Lodge of Salina recruited von Schoultz to their cause. Von Schoultz, for his part, eagerly accepted the role of liberating Canada from what he believed to be the oppression of Britain.

One of the leading Hunters in New York state, John Ward Birge, devised a plan to capture the British garrison of Fort Wellington located in Prescott. Directly opposite Prescott was Ogdensburg, New York, which was a hotbed of Hunter sympathizers. Birge believed that the seizing of Fort Wellington, one of the main British garrisons along the Canadian-American border, would prompt dissatisfied Canadians to rise up in revolt.

Birge began recruiting a force of some 300 men, arms and ammunition, cannon, and vessels for this attack. One of those he recruited was the recently arrived Nils von Schoultz.

Through the summer and fall of 1838, the Government of Upper Canada heard reports from informants living in the United States regarding the growth of popular American sentiment in favour of invading Canada and of the buildup of men, money and weapons in American communities along the border. The government began to re-build Fort Wellington, and to establish a number of militia units in communities near the American border.

During the night of Sunday, 11 November an American steamer towing two schooners entered Canadian waters. The private invasion force assembled by Birge — who had given himself the grandiose military title of "Major-General" — was aboard these vessels.

Near Prescott, the lines to the two schooners were cut. An attempt at a surprise docking at the wharf in Prescott was sighted by residents who raised the alarm. The two schooners retreated into the waters of the river and then separated.

At this point, the invasion of Canada by the Hunters became a combination of organizational chaos and low farce. The larger of the two schooners grounded on a sandbar in American waters. The smaller one, which had von Schoultz on board, landed on the Canadian side of the river at Windmill Point and began unloading its men and equipment.

Low farce occurred when "Major-General" Birge suddenly developed what he claimed was a stomach disorder and abruptly retired from the scene. Others also decided to remain in Ogdensburg. More than one hundred insurgents never made it to the Canadian side.

Later that Monday, officials of the United States Navy arrived in Ogdensburg and prevented any more attempts by American vessels to cross. By Tuesday, there was little communication between Ogdensburg and Windmill Point.

When the insurgents at Windmill Point realized that Birge would not be joining them, von Schoultz was chosen as commander.

The American insurgents might have been more successful despite their appalling lack of preparation. While the landing at Windmill Point was totally unplanned, the insurgents were fortunate to find a massive stone windmill some 20 metres high surrounded by several stone buildings. From the top of the mill one could easily reconnoitre the surrounding area for enemy troop movements. For an experienced military commander such as Nils von Schoultz, Windmill Point could have served as a perfect site for establishing a beachhead on enemy territory until reinforcements arrived.

The British and Canadians quickly collected a large force of regular soldiers and militia numbering nearly 2,000 men. On Tuesday morning of that week the two sides engaged in a fierce rifle and musket battle. Finding the insurgents too strongly entrenched, the Canadians retreated to await the arrival of their heavy artillery.

As the week progressed, the situation for the insurgents became increasingly hopeless. The Canadians had not risen in rebellion against their colonial government. In fact, the very opposite was happening as hundreds joined their local militias to repulse this invasion. Some of the Americans either escaped to the United States or were captured while trying to leave. Many suffered from wounds incurred in the Tuesday battle. The weather turned very cold.

Although the insurgents held their position for five days, no reinforcements came. What was particularly

Ontario Archives

Nils Gustaf von Schoultz.

"The Windmill at Prescott", 1839, by H.F. Ainslie.

frustrating for the hard-pressed American invading party throughout the week was to look across the river and see thousands of Americans, most of whom were sympathetic to the cause of "liberating" Canada from British rule, standing along the shorelines watching events unfold on the Canadian side.

On Friday afternoon, the British artillery began bombarding the American positions. The insurgents began to either surrender or attempt to escape. Von Schoultz himself was captured late Friday evening as he hid in bushes along the river bank.

Many of the battles fought in 1838 between American raiding parties and the British/Canadian forces were little more than bloody skirmishes lasting less than an hour. The American invaders lacked the discipline of the British regular soldiers or the determination of Canadian militia members defending their own homes.

It is to von Schoultz's great credit as a military commander that the rag-tag fighting unit he led (some of whom were only 14 years old and none of whom had any real military experience) held out for five days in a desperate situation after sustaining heavy initial losses.

The prisoners spent one night in Fort Wellington. They were then transferred by steamer to Kingston and the military prison at Fort Henry where the government held its courts-martial.

A young Kingston lawyer, John A. Macdonald, had been retained to give legal advice to one of the other prisoners. Macdonald met von Schoultz at this time and gave him some legal advice for conducting his defence at his court-martial. Von Schoultz insisted on pleading guilty.

At his court-martial, von Schoultz made a distinct impression on the British regular soldiers and others of his Canadian captors. As leader of the insurgents, von Schoultz assumed all responsibility for the tragedy at Windmill Point. He made no attempt to defend himself except to say he had treated his wounded prisoners well. He never displayed any bitterness and refrained from censuring those who had let him down with promises of reinforcements.

A total of eleven of the prisoners were executed. Sixty others were sent into exile to the penal colony of Van Dieman's Land (present-day Tasmania).

The first of the insurgents to hang was Nils von Schoultz. As a mark of respect for his military background, von Schoultz was the only one of the eleven to be hanged and buried at Fort Henry.

Throughout the time of his capture until his execution, von Schoultz maintained his posture of being a former Polish officer. It was perhaps essential that he continued to do so. The fact that von Schoultz had a Scottish wife and that he had abandoned her and their children would hardly have improved his situation. It would probably have dissipated the respect he had been able to create among his captors as an honourable, albeit misguided, lover of liberty.

For more than 130 years, Canadian and American

Metropolitan Toronto Library

A company of the 93rd (Highland) Foot was sent from Montreal to help repel the Americans in Upper Canada.

National Archives of Canada

The young lawyer John A. Macdonald, 1842.

historians regarded von Schoultz as the former Polish army officer he had portrayed himself to be. It was not until 1971, when Ella Pipping, von Schoultz's great-granddaughter, published a biography on her ancestor that historians learned that von Schoultz was actually a Finn by birth, a Swedish national and that, in fact, this "Polish" freedom-fighter had only spent some six months in Poland.

Macdonald drew up von Schoultz's will. Money was left to the Roman Catholic college in Kingston and to families of the Canadian militiamen killed at the Windmill. He wrote a last letter to friends in Salina. There was, however, no last letter to his family in Sweden.

Macdonald spent considerable time talking with von Schoultz. This "Polish" insurgent left a deep impression on his legal counsel. According to Donald Creighton, in his biography of Canada's first prime minister, the Windmill Point incident conceived in Macdonald's mind the problem of how a divided Canada could defend itself from its southern neighbour and the need for some kind of union of Britain's North American colonies. Macdonald would remember von Schoultz for the rest of his life.

The final tragic irony to the von Schoultz raid was that 1838 was also the year Lord Durham, while Governor of Lower Canada, analyzed the administration of the British colonies of Upper and Lower Canada. His report to the British Government in 1839 recommended changes in the political administration of these two colonies that came to result in self-government for Canadians within the British Empire.

The battle at Windmill Point, therefore, was a bloody footnote in the political evolution taking place in British North America and can be viewed as an example of uninvited outside forces presuming to dictate the development of the emerging Canadian nation.

To his fellow prisoners and to the British officers and captors, Nils von Schoultz left the memory of a Polish officer of impeccable manners, immense charm and noble dignity in the way he accepted his death sentence. The report on his execution read: "He maintained his demeanour to the last." Everyone remembered him as a gallant freedom-fighter who had been tragically misinformed about conditions in Canada. ♦

Lennard Sillanpaa of Orleans, Ontario, is working on a study of Finns in Canada.

MARY ANN SHADD IN CANADA

Last Stop on the Underground Railroad

By Cheryl MacDonald

In October 1855 people in Philadelphia were talking about Mary Ann Shadd. The young black woman had been in the "City of Brotherly Love" several times before, usually to promote the *Provincial Freeman*, a Canadian-based abolitionist paper. That was her purpose again this fall, but she also took advantage of an opportunity to participate in a public debate against J.C. Wears, a prominent Philadelphian.

The topic was emigration, specifically the emigration of blacks. For five years, America's black population had feared the repercussions of the Fugitive Slave Law, which allowed slave hunters to pursue runaways into states where slavery was illegal. In some cases, free born blacks were also captured and sold into slavery. Many reacted by fleeing. Most went north to Canada, although there were groups whose preferred destinations were Africa or the Caribbean islands.

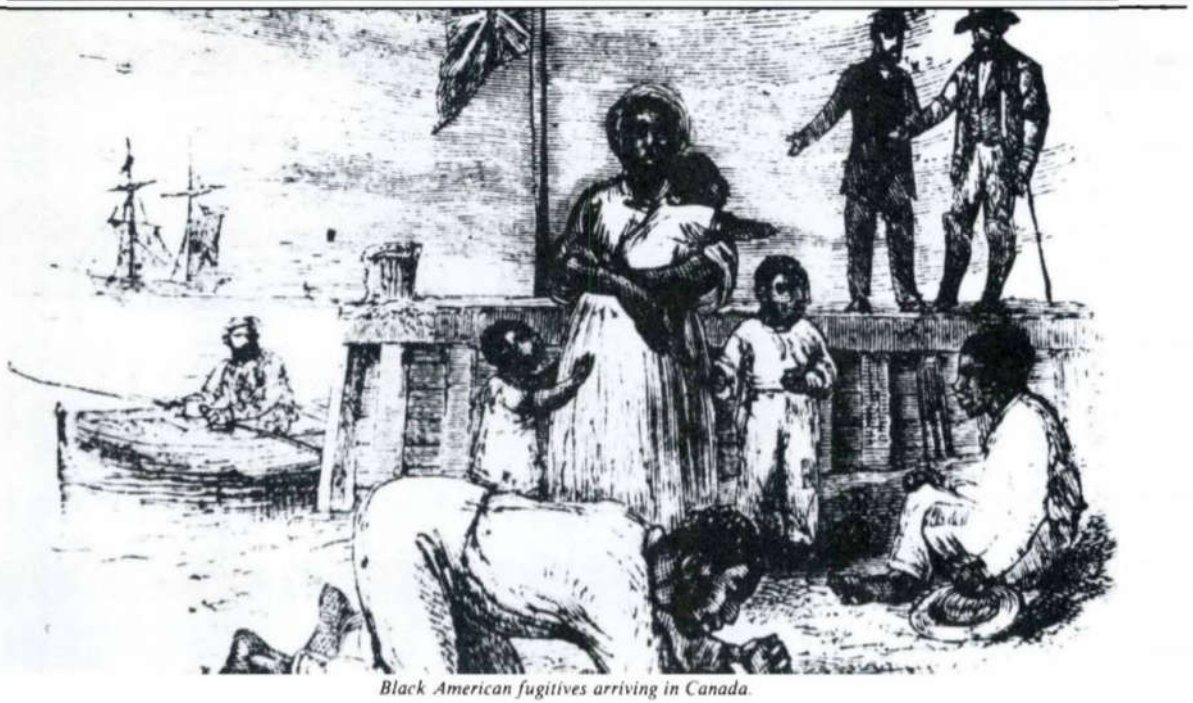
For her part, the dynamic young woman with "bright sharp eyes, that look right through you" favoured Canada, a point she made clear in the debate against Wears. Her knowledge of the subject was impressive, gained largely through her own experience. She had been in Canada since 1851; in 1852 she had published a pamphlet, *Notes of Canada West*, describing conditions blacks were likely to find north of the border.

The facts Shadd presented in the debate were similar to those in the 44-page pamphlet. Canada West offered more benefits than any other destination, she argued. Tropical Africa, she said, was "teeming. . .with the breath of pestilence, a burning sun and fearful maladies. . ." In the Southern States, blacks faced "the probability of worse than inquisitorial inhumanity". By contrast, Canada offered good soil, temperate conditions and a beneficial political climate.

Yes, there was prejudice:

> Coloured persons have been refused entertainment in taverns, (invariably of an inferior class,) and on some boats distinction is made; but in all cases, it is that kind of distinction that is made between poor foreigners and other passengers. . . . It is an easy matter to make out a case of prejudice in any country. We naturally look for it, and the conduct of many is calculated to cause unpleasant treatment, and to make it difficult for well-mannered persons to get comfortable accommodations. There is a medium between servility and presumption, that recommends itself to all persons of common sense, of whatever rank or complexion; and if coloured people would avoid the two extremes, there would be but few cases of prejudice to complain of in Canada. In cases in which tavern keepers and other public characters persist in refusing to entertain them, they can, in common with the travelling public, generally, get redress at law.

It was this last fact she emphasized when Wears asked her about racism. Certainly it existed, she conceded, but there was no law to support it, and so "it



Black American fugitives arriving in Canada.

was manageable, not like it is in the States."

Mary Shadd won the debate against Wears. Soon afterward, another triumph followed, when Philadelphians arranged a benefit evening, celebrating her as the first black woman in North America to edit a newspaper. Celebrities, including the "Black Swan", soprano Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, were on hand to ensure the success of the event. When the last song was sung, the last dish of ice cream eaten, enough money had been raised to help Mary Shadd continue to publish her newspaper for a little while longer.

At this point, Mary Shadd's life was dominated by the newspaper. It had not always been so, although the abolition of slavery had been a constant theme in her development. Not that the Shadd family had personal experience with slavery. Both her parents were free born, and, according to a tradition, her father's people had never been slaves.

Abraham Shadd, a shoemaker by trade, actively fought for the abolition of slavery. His house was a station on the Underground Railroad; Shadd also sold subscriptions for the *Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper, an activity that was just as dangerous as helping slaves to freedom. In 1837, Elijah P. Lovejoy, the publisher of the *Liberator* and a friend of the Shadd family, was killed by an Alton, Illinois mob that invaded his office, dumped his printing press into the river, and set fire to the building.

Shadd senior was also active in anti-slavery groups, and for a time served as president of the National Convention for the Improvement of Free People of Colour in the United States. He would later become the first black person elected to public office in Canada West.

There was no doubt that the Shadds were an exceptional family. Isaac, the fourth child and eldest son, served in the Mississippi legislature from 1871 to 1874, part of that time as Speaker of the House. Abraham, a younger brother, practised law in Mississippi and Arkansas. But it was Mary, who rose above the dual barriers of race and sex, whose achievements were most notable.

Mary Ann Camberton Shadd was born 9 October 1823 in Wilmington, Delaware. It was a slave state, and, although the Shadds were free, there were few opportunities to educate their children. So, before Mary was ten, the family moved to West Chester, Pennsylvania, close to Philadelphia. There, according to family tradition, she was educated by Quakers.

At a time when it was illegal in many states to teach a slave to read or write, education was the Holy Grail for blacks who sought a better life. And, like the legendary Grail, it was an elusive goal when community prejudice often kept black children out of school even if the law provided for their education. For a girl like young Mary Shadd, brought up to work for the improvement of her people, education was an inevitable starting point. After finishing school at sixteen, she returned to Wilmington, where she opened a school for black children. Over the next few years, she taught

Mary Ann Shadd.

in several other places, including Trenton, New Jersey, and New York City.

It was in New York that an incident took place which epitomizes Mary Shadd's character. Perhaps apocryphal, it nevertheless captures her formidable dignity and determination. According to the story, she was walking along Broadway, saw a trolley car, and flagged it down. It was a time when few black women dared to ride on trolleys, let alone signal one to stop. But, in Mary's case, "there was such an air of imperative command. . . that the large, coarse ruffianly driver" stopped his horses.

She was never one to back down from conflict. By the late 1840s, she was actively seeking it with letters to the editors of newspapers and, in 1849, a 12-page pamphlet, *Hints to the Coloured People of the North*. In many of her writings there is a note of urgency, an impatience with the long, drawn out process of committee discussion and resolutions, a plea for black people to take their destiny into their own hands. Typical was a letter to Frederick Douglass's *North Star*, in which she suggested blacks should become more involved in farming:

> The estimation in which we would be held by those in power, would be quite different, were we producers and not merely as now, consumers. . . .We have been holding conventions for years — have been assembling together and whining over our difficulties and afflictions, passing resolutions on resolutions to any extent; but it does really seem that we have made but little progress, considering our resolves. . . .We should do more and talk less.

Within two years, Mary was following her own advice and trying to do more. In mid-September 1851, she visited Toronto, where she heard Martin Delany, a prominent black abolitionist, and John Scoble, an English supporter of the cause, speak on slavery. She also heard Henry Bibb, founder of *Voice of the Fugitive*, a newspaper based in Sandwich, not far from Windsor. Within days, Mary Ann was writing to her brother, Isaac, who was in Buffalo, that she liked Canada, and that she was on her way to Sandwich. After a stop in Buffalo, she boarded a steamer for the Detroit-Windsor area.

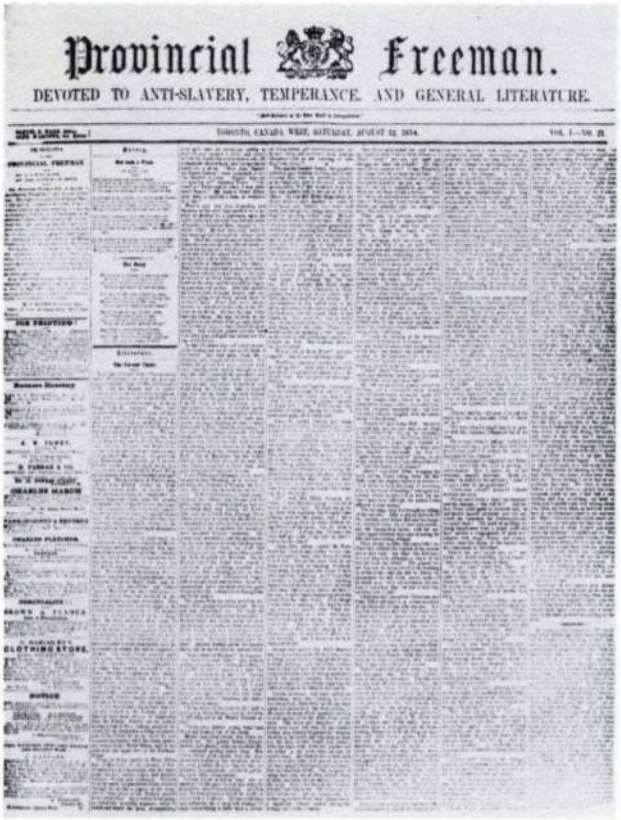
Windsor was a tiny community of perhaps 200 people at the time. Because of its proximity to Detroit, it was a terminal on the Underground Railroad. As more and more blacks moved into the area, prejudice against them grew. That was just one disadvantage the new arrivals faced — there were also housing shortages, poverty, disease, and the problems of adjusting to the climate and laws of a new country.

Mary Ann travelled to the area after hearing about the destitution and ignorance of the black refugees. She wanted to help, and, again, chose teaching as the way. Initially, she moved cautiously. Henry Bibb's wife had her own school, and before beginning to teach, Mary Shadd asked her permission.

At first, things went smoothly, but then Mary's principles got in the way. She strongly opposed segregation, would not teach in a segregated school, and for the same reason, had not renewed her membership in the African Methodist Episcopalian church. In her letter to the *North Star* in March 1849 she had hinted at the reasons. "What intellectually we most need . . . is the knowledge of the white man, a great amount of which by intercourse in public meetings, etc., we could glean. . ."

Again, Mary Shadd was fighting an uphill battle. At a school meeting, she was the only one to oppose segregation — strictly on a matter of principle, since schools for white children already existed, and in practice no white students attended schools run by blacks. Still, there was some support for her view in the community, enough to allow her to open a private school in an abandoned barracks. She charged 4 shillings a month for attendance at the drafty and badly furnished school, then dropped the fee to 3 shillings as the Bibbs brought increasing pressure against her.

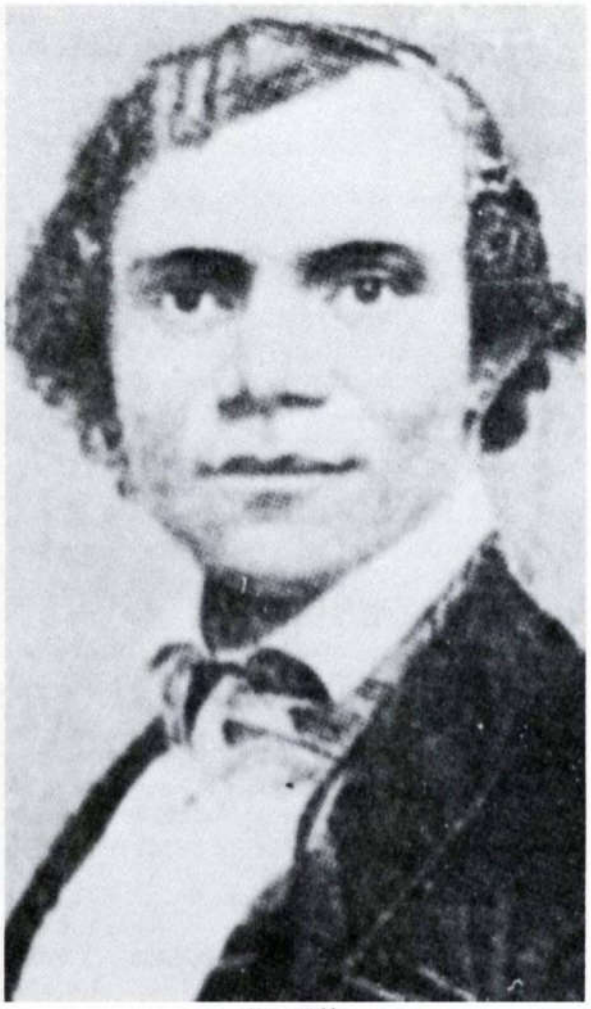
As long as she had twenty paying pupils, Mary calculated there would be enough to cover the costs of running the school and her own living expenses. However, as enthusiasm gave way to parental apathy,



Provincial Freeman.

DEVOTED TO ANTI-SLAVERY, TEMPERANCE, AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

"The Provincial Freeman": From anti-slavery to temperance.



Henry Bibb.

payments dropped off. So she wrote to the American Missionary Society, an organization that had several missionaries and teachers working with fugitive blacks, asking for support for the school.

Her contact was George Whipple, secretary of the organization. Before he would proceed, Whipple wanted to know more about Schoolmistress Shadd. One reference came from Reverend Alexander McArthur, who described her as

> a young (light coloured) lady of fine education, refined address and christian deportment. . . .well qualified to fill the situation in question. . . and possessing an energy of character & enlargement of views well fitting her for the work of teaching amongst such people as this.

Mary eventually got $125 for support of the school, but by this time it had temporarily closed, due to cold weather and lack of firewood.

When she learned of the American Missionary Society's support, Mary discussed it with her colleagues. Already frustrated with community apathy, and remembering how swiftly payments had trickled to almost nothing, she feared that news of the supplement might be interpreted as a signal to stop payments altogether. So she purposely kept news of the grant a secret.

Four months later, the *Voice of the Fugitive* reported the grant, and Mary was forced to defend her decision. It was just one more act in the bitter rivalry between Mary, the Bibbs, and their respective factions, a drama that has been amply documented in the Jim Bearden and Linda Jean Butler biography, *The Life and Times of Mary Shadd Cary*. The struggle was characteristic of the problems facing abolitionists, free blacks and fugitive slaves alike. Sometimes, the problems arose from philosophical differences; sometimes, it was motivated by greed for power and money. Like modern patients and prisoners, freshly released from institutions after years of having all their needs seen to, newly freed blacks had awesome adjustments to make in their way of living. With little education, many were easy prey for unscrupulous leaders, whether white or black.

To Mary Ann Shadd, Henry Bibb was one such

unscrupulous leader. One of his jobs was gathering money for the Refugee Home Society, a segregated community funded by donations and designed to give fugitives a place to live and develop farming skills. But Shadd pointed out in 1852 that, with only 22 families on the Refugee Home Society's 100,000 acres, no real community existed. Worse, the Bibbs appeared to be growing rich on the donations they collected.

Another prominent black she censured was Josiah Henson, founder of Dawn, a settlement for blacks where Henson opened the British American Institute, one of the earliest vocational schools in North America. Believed by many of his contemporaries to be the prototype for Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom, Henson was a stubborn, ambitious and eloquent man, often accused of mishandling community funds entrusted to his care. While some felt his only flaw was lack of managerial skill, others suspected him of worse faults. Mary Ann Shadd detested him, possibly because he was too much like other ministers she had known. She described them as members of a "corrupt clergy"...

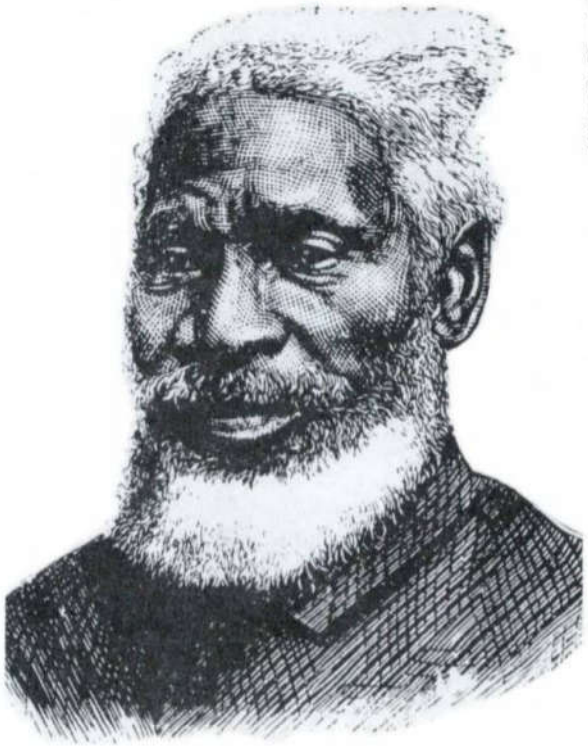
> inculcating ignorance as a duty, superstition as a true religion....their gross ignorance and insolent bearing, together with the sanctimonious garb and by virtue of their calling, a character for mystery they assume...

In her war against men like Bibb and Henson, Mary Ann won the battle over the American Missionary Society's unreported support of her school. At a public meeting, she was even thanked for her work. But Mary Shadd was not a woman who could be bought off with pleasant words. In a series of anonymous articles for the *Western Evangelist*, she attacked the Refugee Home Society. And, in the same month, she teamed up with the Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward.

A noted orator and minister who had once led a white congregation, Ward came to Windsor as a speaker for the Anti-Slavery Society. Like Mary, he opposed segregation, and, with her and some others, formed the Windsor Anti-Slavery Society. One of their goals was to create a newspaper which would provide a different viewpoint from the *Voice of the Fugitive*.

Ostensibly, Ward was editor of the *Provincial Freeman* but he was usually away on speaking engagements. In fact, Mary Shadd, whose official capacity was business manager, was publisher, editor and subscription agent. By this time, she had been dismissed by the Missionary Society. She believed her race, her sex, and her refusal to sacrifice principles had all hurt her cause, and afterwards she seldom lost an opportunity to criticize "Yankee Missionaries, such as we have met in Canada, with smooth words and hearts full of negro-hate."

However, she had little time to brood. She travelled throughout Canada West and the northern United States, speaking on abolition and emigration, and encouraging her listeners to subscribe to the *Provincial Freeman*. It was a far from easy task. With little money, she could only afford the cheapest fares on trains or steamers, and, as a black woman travelling alone, she was often in danger of insult or physical violence.



Metropolitan Toronto Library

Josiah Henson.

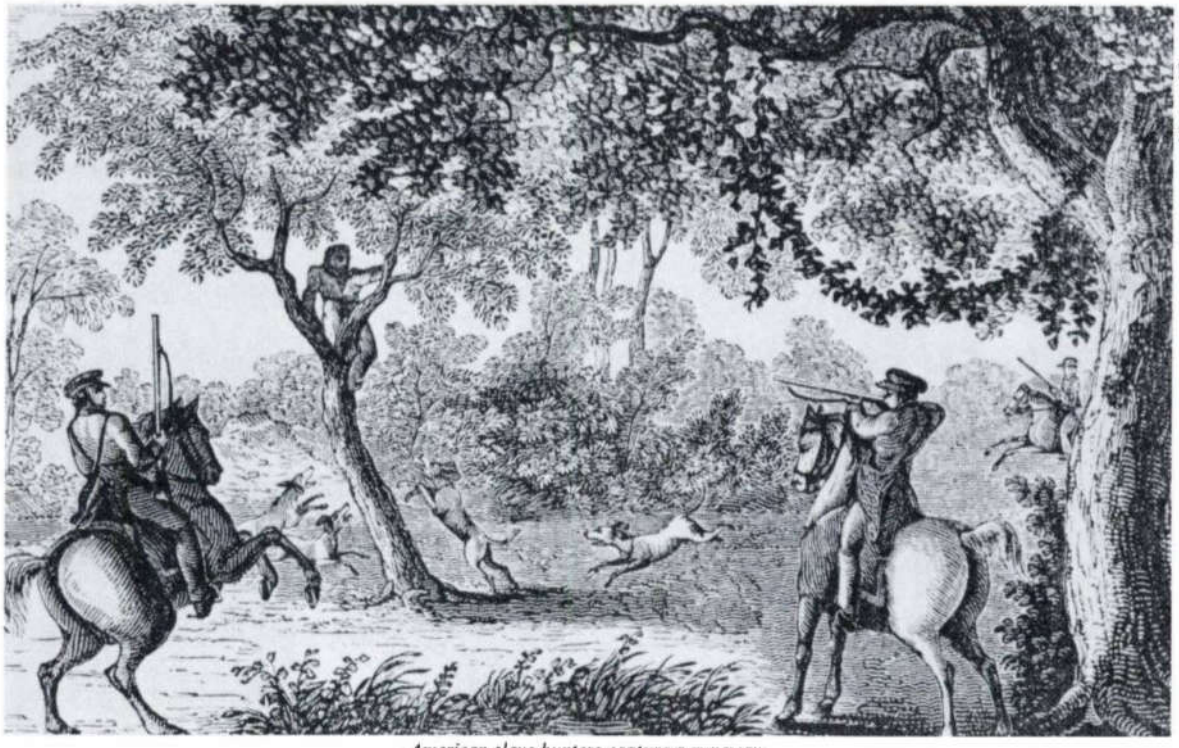
She persisted, and, for a time, it seemed the newspaper might prosper. In 1854, she moved it to Toronto, then a town of 47,000, with the largest black community in the province. At first, she kept her identity as editor secret, using initials rather than her name. There were still strong biases against women working in male-dominated fields, although the seeds of the North American women's movement had been sown at Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. It didn't take long, though, before people suspected her identity, and while some took exception to a female's control of a newspaper, there were others who regarded Mary Shadd as "one of the best editors in the province even if she did wear petticoats".

The newspaper contained a potpourri of news articles from other sources. An introduction in an early issue noted:

> The *Provincial Freeman* will be devoted to the elevation of the Coloured People; and in seeking to

Ontario Archives

Canadian blacks at Amherstburg celebrate Emancipation Day, 1897, marking the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Great Britain and the Empire, 1 August 1833.



Library of Congress

American slave hunters capture a runaway.

effect this object, it will advocate the cause of TEMPERANCE. . . .

Many articles dealt with abolition, emigration to Canada, and local events. As time went on, Mary's brother Isaac and her sister Amelia also worked for the paper. In 1854, Amelia served as editor while Mary toured western Ontario, sending back letters whenever she could. From London she wrote on 25 July:

> Attended the meeting held by the voters last night, at Chatham, at which I saw quite a large number of females. I like that new feature in political gatherings, and you will agree with me, that much of the asperity of such assemblies will be softened by their presence.

She was back in Toronto in time for Emancipation Day, 1 August, and a report of the event appeared on 5 August. Starting with a prayer meeting at 5 a.m. in the Sayer Street Chapel, Toronto blacks paraded to the lake shore to meet the *Arabian*, carrying visitors from Hamilton. Rain delayed the proceedings a little bit, but addresses followed, along with a procession moving to the music of Scott's Brass Band. There was a sermon at the cathedral, then dinner at Government Grounds and more speeches, including an address to the Queen, which began:

> *We*, the Coloured Inhabitants of Canada, most respectfully, most gratefully and most loyally approach your Gracious Majesty, on this, the anniversary of our *death* to *Slavery*, and our *birth* to *Freedom*. . . .Our hearts are wholly your Majesty's. . . .

The speeches were followed by a resolution to meet in Hamilton in 1855 and several toasts, including one to the queen, one to the *Provincial Freeman*, and a final one to "Our wives and Sweethearts".

Soon afterward, Mary was off on tour again. After her triumphant benefit in Philadelphia, she returned to Canada. In January, she married Thomas Cary, a Toronto barber, at her sister's home in St. Catharines. Within a week, she was back on the road, promoting the *Provincial Freeman*.

Eventually, public opinion forced Mary to stop editing the paper. She was replaced by a "gentleman Editor", who published the newspaper from the Chatham area. Mary continued to be the motivating force behind the publication, though, and she moved to Chatham as well. Aside from the newspaper, there was another attraction — by this time, her parents and siblings had emigrated to Canada.

Although she and Thomas were frequently separated because of business concerns, their first child, a daughter, was born in August 1857. Around this time, publication of the *Provincial Freeman* stopped, partly because of Mary's family obligations, partly because the newspaper was deeply in debt. Thomas continued to work in Toronto, sending money whenever he could, baby Sarah was left in the care of her 19-year-old aunt, and Mary went on the road yet again to find new subscribers. In June 1858, the paper resumed publication, and, around this time, Thomas joined the staff.

Getting the paper out became more and more difficult as war clouds gathered over the United States. Mary also had other concerns. In November 1860, Thomas died after a long illness. By this time, there was another child to care for, a son named Linton. Mary followed the Civil War with interest, and, beginning around January 1864 helped recruit Canadian blacks for the Union army. After the war, she returned to the United States. In 1868, she obtained a teaching certificate in Detroit, then moved to Washington, D.C., where she taught and later worked as the principal of a public school.

Like her brothers, Abraham and Isaac, she also studied law. Although there is no record of her being admitted to the bar, she is listed in the senior class of 1872 at Howard Law School. She was also deeply involved in the women's movement, and addressed the national convention of the Women's Suffrage Association in 1878.

Mary Shadd Cary died in Washington, D.C. in 1893. In her lifetime, she had either been loved as a crusader for justice or hated as a "mischief maker". She was often tactless, fiercely attacking those whose ideas did not coincide with her own. But there was no doubt she had the courage of her convictions. An episode recounted by her daughter illustrates this.

One Sunday, ignoring national boundaries, slave hunters pursued a black youth into Chatham, where they caught him. Enraged, Mary tore the boy away from them, ran to the courthouse and rang the bell, warning the whole town. As a crowd gathered, the hunters fled. Mary Shadd Cary had won one more battle. ♦

Cheryl MacDonald has written biographies of Victorian diva Emma Albani and pioneer feminist Adelaide Hoodless, both published by Dundurn Press.

A 'Sourdough' In France

Robert W. Service: The 'Dream Haven' Years

By HUBERT G. MAYES

Canadians who enjoy Robert Service's poems about their northland like to think of the author as one of their own. After all, the books which first earned him fame and prosperity were written in the Yukon, and his cabin on a hillside overlooking Dawson City is still a major attraction for tourists. Furthermore, most of the principal anthologies of Canadian poetry include several of his works. But his time in Canada was relatively short (1896-1912), his later visits to this country were infrequent, and he never returned to the Yukon. Great Britain's claim to Service could be considered more legitimate, since he was born in England and brought up in Scotland. However, he seems to have had little affection for his native land, judging by the infrequent references to it in his autobiography. It is true that most of his books were published in London as well as in New York and Toronto, but his reputation is not nearly as great in Britain as it is in North America.

It probably matters very little how Service is classified as far as national affiliation is concerned. His works have been read with pleasure and will continue to be appreciated wherever English is spoken and read. However, if any country can lay claim to Service by virtue of long residence, marriage and strong emotional ties, it is most certainly France, and in particular, the old province of Brittany. For 45 years Service looked on France as home, and it was in Brittany that he died in 1958. Intrigued by his attachment to his adopted country, I made a short "pilgrimage" in June of 1989 to his beloved home on the Brittany coast and to his grave in the nearby cemetery.

Service saw France for the first time in 1913 after spending a short period in the Balkan countries as a war correspondent. He had left the Yukon in 1912 on completion of his third collection of verse entitled *Rhymes of a Rolling Stone*. His reputation was already well established, thanks to the success of *Songs of a Sourdough* (entitled *The Spell of the Yukon* in the American edition), *Ballads of a Cheechako* and his novel *The Trail of Ninety-Eight*. In Paris he settled into a cheap room in the Latin Quarter. His characteristic appetite for adventure had been whetted by reading about the city, and he was soon revelling in his life as a Parisian. For a time he led a Bohemian existence, taking lessons in painting and dressing the part of the young Parisian artist. When he settled down to writing again, it was to produce his second novel, *The Pretender*.

During his first year in Paris Service set out on a "push-bike" to see something of the French countryside. His route took him through Normandy to Brittany, a region which completely captivated him. In *Harper of Heaven*, the second volume of his autobiography, he relates how delighted he was to discover a lovely village on the rocky shoreline of the north coast. Though he does not name it at this point, it was Lancieux, a few kilometres west of Dinard. There his eyes kept turning to "a little red-roofed house that stood on a sea-jutting rock". The emotional appeal of this little house is evident in his first description:

> It was far apart from any other and seemed so lonely. It was flanked by coves of golden sand and backed by a yellow blaze of gorse. Somehow, wherever I gazed, my eyes returned to that little house till at last it seemed to call to me saying: "I am empty and sad. I want to be lived in. Please take pity on

National Archives of Canada

Robert Service heeds the call of the wild, somewhere between Fort Smith and Fort Norman, 1911. Photograph by George M. Douglas.

me. Buy me. You will love me. You will never, never be sorry. . ."

Determined to buy the house, Service dressed himself up in the shabbiest clothes he could find and hoodwinked the owner into selling the property for much less than the original asking price. When invited to make an inventory (the deal included the furnishings), he replied: "I do not want to see the interior of the house. I fell in love with the outside and I want the inside to be a pleasure in store." To his new home he gave the sentimental name "Dream Haven". He then returned to Paris to give his attention to "the greatest of all life's adventures — Marriage".

In June of 1913 he married Germaine Bourgoin, the daughter of a distillery owner, and the couple began married life in a two-room apartment which they called the "Rabbit Hutch". After a trip to London to deliver the manuscript of *The Pretender* to the publisher, Service and his wife took a holiday trip on bicycles through Touraine into Brittany. Germaine knew nothing about Dream Haven and had been led to believe by her husband that he was not very well off. As they sat on a hill across the cove from Dream Haven, Service pointed out the little house with the red roof and suggested that they go over to have a look. In spite of Germaine's objections, he opened the door of the house and peeked in. As he tells the story,

To our surprise there were fresh flowers on the dining-room table and everything was neat as a new pin. "How well it's kept," said the Missus. "I believe it's occupied after all. We had better knock." Then she gave a scream, for the kitchen door opened and a smiling peasant woman greeted us: "Welcome, Monsieur," she said. "I've been *expecting* you. . ." There! The jig was up. Turning to my wife I said: "I'm a miserable deceiver. I must make full confession. This house is mine, furnished complete to the car in the garage. It's our future home. And now let me introduce Anastasia, our caretaker, and I hope she'll hold the job for the rest of her life."

After a fine supper Service experienced a deep sense of peace and contentment. "Here I had found my anchorage," he says, "and in this beauty spot I would pass most of my life. And I was not wrong. For twenty-seven years I spent six months of each in Dream Haven."

The summer of 1914 was coming to an end at Dream Haven when one evening the church bells began to sound the tocsin — the signal that France was at war. Service attempted to join a British fighting unit but was refused. After a short period as a war correspondent he served as a driver with an American Ambulance Unit attached to the French army. During a period of illness spent at Dream Haven he wrote his *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man*. When Paris was being shelled by "Big Bertha" and the raids by Zeppelins were about to begin, Service got his family away (he and Germaine now had a daughter) to the peace and safety

of Dream Haven. That the house in Brittany was indeed a haven is evident from his comment on the move:

> When we took the train in the serenity of the summer evening I realised that soon hell would be breaking loose and I conceived a horror of this sinister city under the bombs. And as we drew away from it I breathed relief with every mile. And oh, how I welcomed the blessed tranquillity of my home, the windmill girt horizon, my scoop of yellow sand with the sky an azure dream. . . .

Later, the author was given an assignment by the Canadian Government to tour France, reporting the activities of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. When the war was over, Service retreated to Dream Haven to write his *Ballads of a Bohemian*. In 1919 the family moved into a new Parisian residence, a spacious apartment on the Place du Panthéon, which they occupied at intervals until 1929. In 1931 they also acquired an apartment in Nice where they spent their winters. Summers were spent at Dream Haven.

During the twenties Service produced a number of thriller novels. Two of these, *The Poisoned Paradise* and *The Roughneck*, were made into films in Hollywood. *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* also served as the basis for a Hollywood movie. The thirties were not a period of great productivity for Service. He made two trips to the Soviet Union in 1937 and 1938 — they are the substance of seventeen chapters in *Harper of Heaven* — and published a collection of songs called *Twenty Bath-Tub Ballads* for which he wrote both the words and the music.

Dream Haven again enters the Service autobiography in a dramatic way in 1940. War had broken out in September of 1939, but Robert, Germaine and their daughter Iris spent the winter as usual in their apartment in Nice. In the spring, feeling insecure so close to the Italian frontier, they decided to return to Dream Haven. At that point Hitler unleashed his *blitzkrieg*, and the Services found themselves on the Paris-Rennes train with hundreds of people escaping like themselves. Along the road between Rennes and Lancieux were many refugee cars stranded for lack of gas. Some were driven by Belgian women "with broods of children". The welcome at home must have seemed particularly heart-warming. Service writes:

> Dear Dream Haven was lovelier than ever. I never watched so eagerly for my eyes to fill with that blessed vision, the red-roofed house on the point, the sandy cove, the pines and gorse, with beyond the green sea broken by rocky islets. And there was Tasie and her family awaiting us with hugs and kisses, and the old house all ready to welcome us as if it too were smiling joyfully.

At first there was a feeling of safety from the dangers of war. But it was soon evident that France would

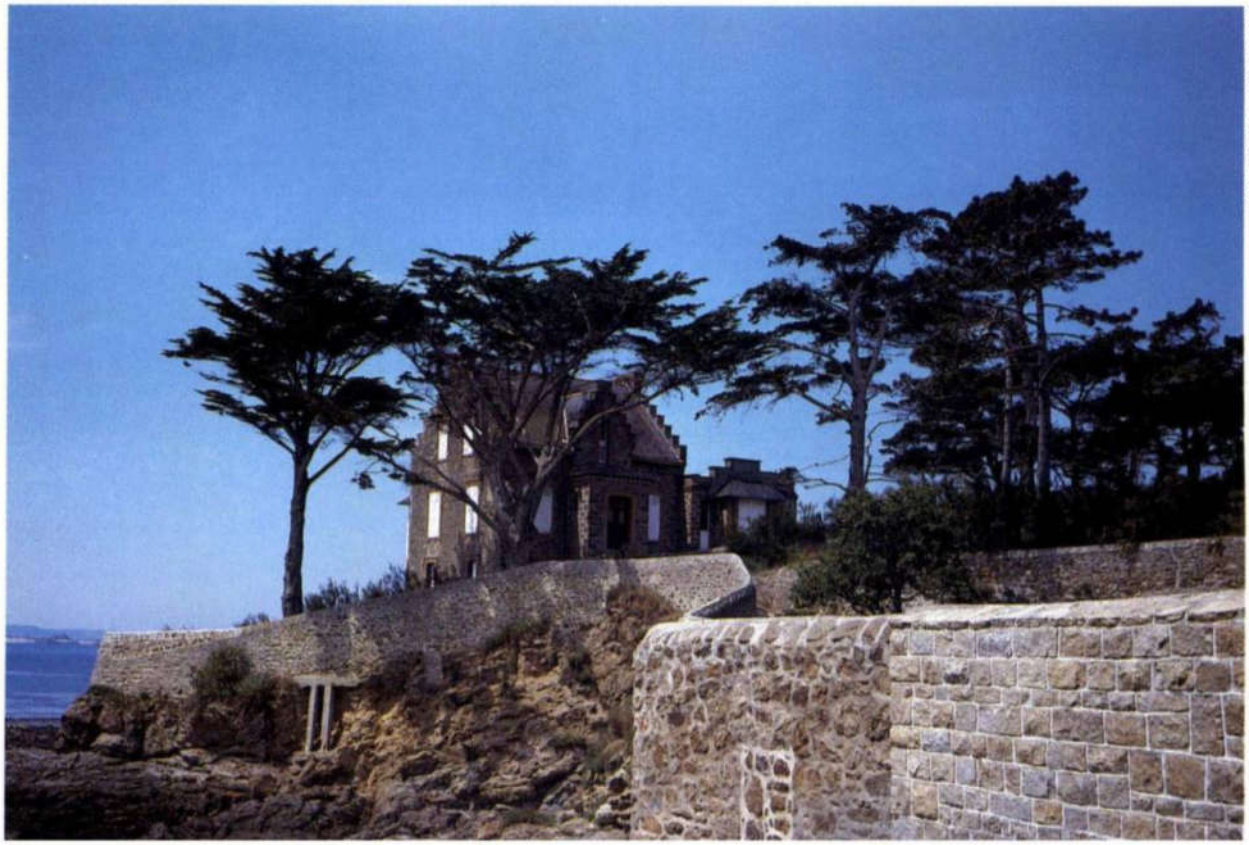
The poet in uniform, 1916.

fall. Escape to the south was impossible; there was no gas and the roads and bridges were impassable. The only way out was to attempt to reach England by boat from St. Malo. Service announced to his family that they had half an hour to pack. He destroyed all his papers of any value, then packed his own suitcase. The moment to leave had come:

> I loaded everything on the car and had a last walk round the house. Poor, dear Dream Haven! Would I ever see it again? What would happen to it in the wrath of the days to come? Last thing I did was to go to my library of two thousand books and caress some of those I loved most. Then, feeling heartbroken, I said goodbye to my home for what I thought would be the last time. . .

After saying farewell to the weeping Anastasia and her family and to their maid, Aline, the Services drove along a country road to St. Malo. Here they were able to board the *Hull Trader*, which was about to sail with several hundred wounded British soldiers, five hundred troops and about fifty refugees. The ship made its dangerous way across the Channel by night and docked in Weymouth.

The Service family later crossed the Atlantic to Canada and ended their flight from Dream Haven in Hollywood. They had spent the winter of 1922-23 in the film capital, and it was no doubt the good memories of this interlude that drew them back. Although they were far from home, the war years were in fact happy ones. It was during this period that Service composed the first volume of his autobiography, *Ploughman of the Moon* and made his first and only appearance as a movie actor in *The Spoilers*. His one scene (in which



Hubert G. Mayes Photograph

Trees planted by Service shelter Dream Haven, 1989.

he played himself with Marlene Dietrich in the role of Cherry) required him to say exactly twenty-three words. His assessment of his performance after seeing the film is typical of Service's care not to take any of his artistic efforts too seriously:

> I was pleasantly surprised, for I was not so bad as I had feared. It is true I looked like a sheep and I bleated like one. My Scotch accent was worthy of Will Fyffe, my intonation idiotic, my enamelled smile a grimace. I was as natural as a tailor's dummy. But otherwise I was all right. Anyway, for three minutes' work I earned three hundred dollars, and that's not so bad.

In 1946 the family returned to France, landing in Marseille and arriving in Nice just before Christmas. To their amazement and immense relief they found their apartment exactly as they had left it almost seven years before. Dream Haven however had suffered badly. When Service returned for the summer of 1947, he learned that the house had been looted by the German soldiers who had occupied it. At the end of the war the Commandant had orders to blow it up, but the sudden arrival of American soldiers prevented him from doing so. On the day after Service arrived in Lancieux (a storm had kept him from going to the house immediately), he set out to inspect Dream Haven. As he passed through a wasteland that had been his rose garden, he caught sight of it:

> There! I saw it at last — the old house. Sadly it seemed to welcome me, seeming to say: "Here I am, Master, broken, battered, weak and worn, but faithful to you still. For thirty years I sheltered you. Now, do not abandon me in my age and sorrow. Once again rejoice me with your music and your laughter. . ." And I said: "Home of my Heart, do not fear. I will not desert you. I will return and live in you, and love you as long as life shall last".

All the windows were broken and the wind sweeping through the house "moaned like a lost soul". On the seaward side there were cement platforms for machine guns — evidence of Rommel's orders that the house be torn down and replaced by a bastion. It was time to go in:

> Grudgingly the door yielded to my key and I found myself in the hallway. The wind soughed in the corridors, the floor was splintered underfoot. The wainscotting was shattered, the tapestry torn away, the walls lettered with Boche inscriptions. Luckily

FAMILLE SERVICE

RUE
Robert SERVICE

Service performs on his concertina, Monte Carlo, 1956.

the doors were intact, and I opened that leading to the salon. The first thing I saw was a strange piano, battered, upright, anonymous. [Service had left a Steinway grand piano.] It was cracked and tinny but easy to play, for it was so out of tune that if you struck a false note it sounded like a true one. I thumped out *The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls*, and the music I evoked echoed weirdly in that deserted house.

The building had been gutted "with ferocious enthusiasm"; the woodwork had been systematically smashed and everything that could not be moved had been deliberately damaged. "A beautiful home wrecked, and I was too old to restore it. That was the worst of it: I had not the guts to begin over again." (He was 73.) However, after taking stock and realizing how lucky he was that the house was still standing, he recovered from his discouragement:

> Yes, I was lucky. After all I *was* alive, while so many I had known had come to a sorry end. Radiant living might still be mine. Even in my wild garden there was beauty — gay gowans and impudent poppies. I could fold my hands and invite Peace. Patience, resignation, charity were mine. Largely I had learned the lesson of life. . . So sitting in the quiet sunniness I looked up at Dream Haven and thought of the happy part it had played in the harmony of my days. I would never let the old shack down. As long as health remained I would go back every summer and sing and play and loaf and laugh. I would light the hearth fire and rouse the walls with cheer. And perhaps as I sought my rest with stars burning, I would hear again my mystic melody, my *Harps of Heaven.*

Hearing the "Harps of Heaven" is a recurring motif in the second volume of the autobiography. The image expresses, in the author's own words, "an ineffable happiness too great to be fully realised".

Service was to live another eleven years, much of that time spent in a villa in Monaco, but the summers, as always, at Dream Haven. He continued to write, producing *Harper of Heaven* and seven more volumes of poetry. His death from a heart attack occurred on 11 September 1958.

My visit to Lancieux began at the Town Hall, where several courteous officials provided me with a map and useful information. Dream Haven more than lived up to my expectations. I had no difficulty in recognizing it, having seen a photograph of it in Carl F. Klinck's biography of Service. Built of grey-brown stone (but no longer topped by a red roof), it sits high on a rocky cliff and is half circled by splendid pine trees. Service makes special mention of these trees in *Harper of Heaven.* Describing his return to his property after the war (on the evening already mentioned), he writes:

> It was dusk when I entered the village and a summer storm was brooding. By lightning flashes I followed the path till I neared my home, but all I could see was a black pyramid of pines. My trees! With my own hands I had planted them, digging the hole and setting up the tiny sapling. Now each was forty feet high, with the girth of a woman's waist. How often in my exile I had worried about them, hoping they would be spared. Behold them a tiny forest, hiding the house from view. I hungered to see it, but the thunder roared and the rain poured, so I returned to the village.

The house, which now appears to be unoccupied, looks out over a wide bay where the waters of the "emerald coast" frequently justify that descriptive term, but also shift through a wide range of blues and mauves with the changing light. Dream Haven can be approached from a small cove on the south side, and it is from here that one gets the best view of it from the land. The street leading to the north side of the property has been named "Rue Robert Service" — a tribute from the inhabitants of Lancieux to their famous former resident.

In the cemetery of Lancieux, Service's grave is in a prominent position just to the side of the central cross. It is an imposing though simple monument of polished red granite. Borders of pink begonias along each side show that someone takes responsibility for maintaining the appearance of the grave. At the end of the horizontal stone the words "Famille Service" are very clear, but Service's name on the vertical stone is almost impossible to make out. No other names have been inscribed.

At the Town Hall I was told that a writer from Scotland who is preparing a book on the life and work of Service had recently been in Lancieux to see the house and grave and to interview people who remember the author and his family. For Service devotees, and even for those who know him only as the creator of Dan McGrew and Sam McGee, it will be interesting to see another facet of Service's life in Brittany. Our knowledge of his relations with the French will no longer be derived solely from his autobiography and his verse, but will include, probably for the first time, the observations of his friends and neighbours. The fact that this study is in progress indicates that even though much of Service's work is no longer being read, his reputation as an author endures. For this reason, and also because his zestful, adventurous life has a timeless appeal, there will doubtless be other "pilgrims" who will feel a desire to see Dream Haven and to visit the grave in Lancieux. ◆

Robert and Germaine Service, at home, 1913.

The poet as actor: With Marlene Dietrich in Hollywood, 1942.

Hubert G. Mayes travels often in France in search of French-Canadian connections.

THE GREAT WARS IN THE ROCKIES

Towering Monuments

By Donald B. Smith

Naming any geographical feature after a living individual, or any current event, is a tricky business since many of these commemorative names have only temporary significance. History requires a perspective, which only the passing of time can provide. The Rockies, perhaps more than any other area in Canada, still bear the scars of a too hasty reaction to current affairs in 1914-1918, and again in 1939-1945.

Arthur Wheeler, founder of the Alpine Club of Canada and the British Columbia commissioner on the survey of the provincial boundary between Alberta and B.C., made the original suggestion in 1916 that mountains in the Rockies be named after Allied military figures. Wheeler had a personal as well as a professional reason for his involvement. At the time his only son was serving in France.

While surveying the interprovincial boundary west of the Kananaskis Lakes in the late summer of 1916, Wheeler contacted the Geographic Board of Canada in Ottawa. He proposed that the "striking peaks" in the area be named for "distinguished generals who have rendered such names immortal through their splendid service to France in the great world war now in progress".

Canada, a tiny nation of eight million people had already furnished a volunteer army of 400,000, and would in late 1917 go further by introducing compulsory military service for all males between the ages of 18 and 45.

At this stage no one in Canada knew what really was happening at the front. The stupidities of many Allied generals, the senseless slaughter, the extent of the British war propaganda, only became public knowledge after the war.

It had been the custom of British explorers to give personal names to features in unmapped areas and the Geographic Board of Canada, the federal naming authority, had continued the same tradition. The Board accepted Arthur Wheeler's suggestion of wartime commemorative names enthusiastically. Already Mount Edith Cavell in Jasper National Park had been named after the English nurse in occupied Belgium, shot by the Germans in 1915 for aiding convalescent prisoners to escape.

In early 1917 the Board decided to name peaks west of the Kananaskis Lakes in southern Alberta after Allied military figures. Commissioner Wheeler named the highest peak in the locality of the Palliser Pass "Sir Douglas", after Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, and the Geographic Board placed the names of other British generals and admirals and Empire military figures on peaks around it. Later the Board named peaks in the Kananaskis Country after British ships and admirals involved in the Battle of Jutland, fought in 1916.

The initial names selected for the British military group included four generals (French, Haig, Smith-Dorrien and Robertson) and two admirals (Jellicoe and Beatty). General Maude, who defeated the Turks at Baghdad, and several other British army figures, including General Murray, the British commander in Egypt, were later added.

From the Empire the names of Generals Smuts (later prime minister of South Africa) and Birdwood, representing Australia and New Zealand, were selected. One Canadian general, Henry Burstall was honoured by a peak in what is now Kananaskis Country, and three other Canadian generals — Currie, Mercer and Turner — were honoured just west of Mount Burstall in Banff National Park.

The Allies also received recognition from the Board, which placed the Italian Group with its peaks named after General Cadorna and the Duke of Abruzzi on the B.C. side of the border. Most of the peaks named after French military leaders lie south and west of the Kananaskis Lakes. They honour Pétain, Joffre, Foch,

National Film Board

J.D. Taylor

The mountains at Banff, Alberta.

Cordonnier, Mangin, Lyautey and Sarrail. Field Marshal Putnik of Serbia has a mountain named after him in the Kananaskis Country, and the Belgian General Leman is honoured in the Banff National Park. (Originally the Board had also intended to honour the Russian commander in the Caucasus Mountains, Grand Duke Nicholas, but the idea was shelved after the abdication of the czar, and cancelled after the successful Bolshevik revolution in late 1917, whick took Russia out of the war.)

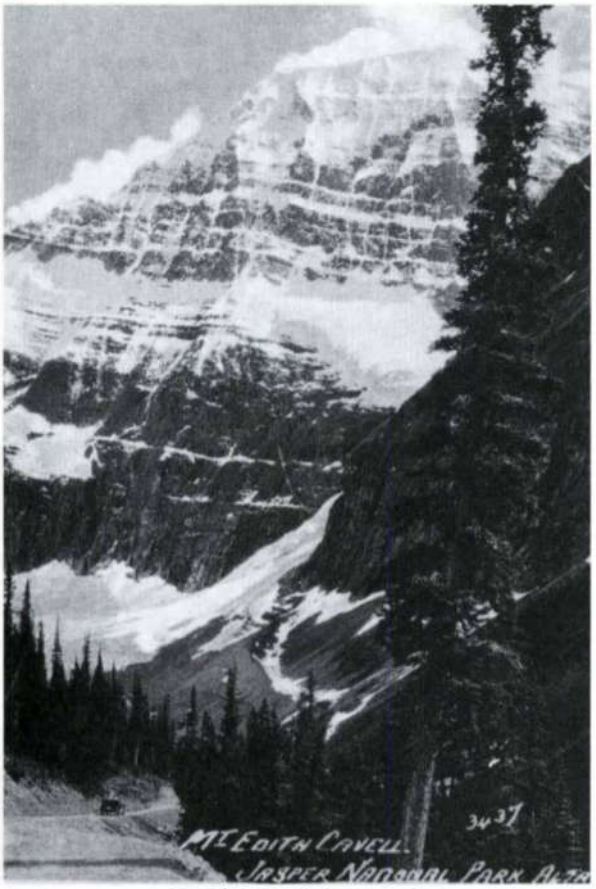
What do these names of Allied generals, admirals and ships of World War I tell us of the Rockies, of 10,000 years of Indian history in what the Blackfoot Indians called "the backbone of the world"? How unfortunate that this area was officially named at a time of patriotic fervour, and many Indian designations were overlooked. For example, instead of the name used by the Stoney Indians for a mountain in the Kananaskis Country, we have Mount Indefatigable, named after a British cruiser in the Battle of Jutland.

Thirty years after the wave of World War I mountain naming, the excesses of the moment had become quite obvious. On 28 May 1947, for instance, the Vancouver *News Herald* pointed out: "After World War I a whole group of Rocky Mountains was named for French and other Allied generals. Many of these men are already forgotten by the world, but their names are clamped on Canadian mountain peaks, presumably forever."

Surprisingly the *News Herald* overlooked what constituted an even greater outrage. During World War II Marshall Philippe Pétain, the French Commander-in-Chief in 1917-1918, had collaborated with the Nazis, and served as the puppet administrator of Vichy France. Pétain was condemned to death after the war, but General de Gaulle commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. No one remembered, though, or if they did, no one complained about, Mount Pétain on the B.C. side of the provincial border in what is now the Elk Lakes Provincial Park, which also contains a Pétain Glacier and Pétain Creek.

Conscious of the excesses of 1914-1918 the federal government acted more cautiously during World War II taking only two major initiatives, the first in late 1944 and the second, in January 1946, immediately after the defeat of Germany and Japan. The Geographic Board of Canada approved the submissions, even though the commemorative names honoured living people, a very dangerous proposition as the example of Philippe Pétain demonstrates so well.

The first initiative, taken in the last months of the war, honoured the Allies' "Big Three" — Churchill,



Mt. Edith Cavell, Jasper Park.

Sir Douglas Haig: Immortalized.

Roosevelt and Stalin. The federal government named three lofty peaks in north central B.C., in the Peace River district (about 140 kilometres southwest of Fort Nelson), after the three wartime leaders. Churchill Peak was to be the tallest of the three features in the northern Rockies — neither it nor Mount Roosevelt would later cause any controversy, but the honouring of the Soviet leader, Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, who had adopted the name of Stalin, "man of steel", certainly would.

Just over a year after the "Big Three" were honoured came the second federal initiative. On the occasion of the visit to Ottawa of Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, Prime Minister Mackenzie King instructed the Geographic Board of Canada to rename Castle Mountain in Banff National Park, Mount Eisenhower. This time, however, the federal government had a fight on its hands. The Alpine Club of Canada called the renaming of Castle Mountain, a long-established and popular name, a sacrilege. To ensure that henceforth all naming in Alberta first obtained provincial approval, Alberta established its own names board.

The struggle against Mount Eisenhower gained momentum in the early 1970s, leading the Historical Society of Alberta in February in 1975 to pass a resolution calling for the restoration of the name Castle Mountain for the well-known landmark. The most prominent tower, the Society suggested, could become Eisenhower Peak. The Alberta Historic Sites Board, the provincial names authority, endorsed the proposal. Opposition still existed, however, from those who felt it would insult Eisenhower's name to make the change.

Finally the advent of Alberta-born Joe Clark as prime minister in 1979 brought results. In mid-October 1979 the new prime minister spoke to John Fraser, his Minister of the Environment about the issue, and they agreed that Mount Eisenhower should indeed revert to Castle Mountain. They suggested that the official change of names, though, only be made *after* the official visit of President Jimmy Carter on 9 November. Dramatically, Alberta's approval arrived on the morning of Thursday 13 December, the day which proved to be the last of Clark's government. Fortunately the name change was now confirmed, for that very evening the Conservatives were defeated in a non-confidence vote in the House of Commons.

Animosity against the designation Mount Stalin rose significantly in the 1980s. Already in the 1970s some opposition had been voiced, as even in the Soviet Union the Soviet dictator's police-state terrorism began to be openly discussed. The Soviet authorities had removed statues and memorials honouring him. The Soviet city

Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

Castle Mountain from the Banff-Windermere Highway, circa 1925.

of Stalingrad had become Volgograd, and Stalin Peak, the highest mountain in the Soviet Union — in the Western Pamirs (near the Afghanistan border) — was re-named "Peak of Communism". One writer from Saskatchewan proposed in 1977 that Canada's Mount Stalin be renamed Mount Solzhenitsyn.

Jaroslav Rudnyckyj, a professor emeritus of the Slavic Studies Department at the University of Manitoba, led the final campaign in the mid-1980s to oust the name of Stalin. Between June 1986 and June 1987 the government of British Columbia received several dozen letters, petitions and telegrams urging that in view of Stalin's crimes the name be altered. After British Columbia agreed to do so, the province in the summer of 1987 re-baptised the controversial peak Mount Peck, in memory of Don Peck, a local guide and outfitter who died in 1980.

Over forty years after the conclusion of World War II, one still hears the echoes of the Great Wars in the Rockies. Particularly in the beautiful Kananaskis Country west of Calgary, the names of 1914-1918 live on, far from the battlegrounds of Europe. Calgary's original bid proposed Mount Sparrowhawk as the site for the recent Olympic alpine events. Sparrowhawk commemorates a British destroyer sunk during the Battle of Jutland.

In recent years, a Canadian government agency, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, which works closely with the provinces, has been naming geographical features after Canadians killed in World War II. To date, several thousand of Canada's war dead have been commemorated in this more fitting manner. ♦

Donald B. Smith teaches history at the University of Calgary.

Company of Adventurers: The Story Told in Pictures

By Helen Burgess

EMPIRE OF THE BAY
An illustrated history of the Hudson's Bay Company

By Peter C. Newman. Edited by John Geiger with photographs by Kevin Fleming. Penguin Group, New York, 1989. 223 pp., illus. $45.00.

The editors and layout artists must have undertaken the production of this book with high enthusiasm. At hand, for the creative process, they had the assembled resources of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives: the historic portraits, maps and documents, the drawings of James Isham, the water-colours of William Richards — the mixed-blood Company servants whose work gave life to the day-to-day journals of events at the forts on Hudson Bay in the 1770s. Paintings of dramatic events in Company history, commissioned from 1914 to 1970 for the Company's calendars, provided illustrations when no other source was available.

In addition to the archival collection, there were photograph files collected by the editors and contributors to *The Beaver* over seven decades: drawings and paintings from the journals of early exploration, information on the location of Indian and fur-trade art — the Paul Kanes, the Peter Rindisbachers, the canoe-travel masterpieces of Frances Anne Hopkins.

The sources, the illustrations, were assembled awaiting the drive of Peter C. Newman and the financial resources of his publishers to bring them to print. The final *coup* was access to the photographs of *National Geographic* contributor Kevin Fleming of the Company's land and establishments as they are today. The combination would give some balance and blend past and present.

On several pages, the combination works well. The Company's ancient charter rests on a pattern of land and rivers that flow into the distance, evoking images of the vast territory that once was Rupert's Land. Samuel Hearne, in comfortable middle age, has as background the sombre enduring ruins of Prince of Wales's Fort. Alexander Mackenzie is poised against a view of the cloud-capped mountains he crossed to reach the Pacific Ocean. (But — was Mackenzie not a Nor'Wester at the time of his journey? No matter, explorers were usually drawn into the Company orbit at some point, either engaged by the Company, given transportation and lodging by the Company or discovered, as remains or otherwise, by Company servants.)

Opposite page: "Kelsey Sees the Buffalo, August 1691", by C.W. Jefferys. Above: "The Last of the Clans" by Thomas Faed — from "Empire of the Bay".

The final presentation bears the stamp of layout artists who were given a free hand. Captions are short and neat; photo credits and the unsightly numbers that code pictures into archival slots (and are insisted upon in the contracts of sources used) are listed in the back pages.

In most cases the oil paintings by Frances Anne Hopkins are given splendid double-page spreads; on the dedication page and on the cover they serve as background for type. The cover painting "Canoe Manned by Voyageurs" is overwhelmed by the inset of the Bay Tower at the corner of Bloor and Yonge in Toronto. The combination jars; an annual report awash in voyageur history? The first-glance reaction is further confused by the fact that the same painting was used in the same wrap-around format on the cover of the best-selling volume *The Canoe* by Kenneth G. Roberts and Philip Shackleton.

While the emphasis of *Empire of the Bay* is clearly on the pictorial, Newman's sprightly text occupies about one-third of the volume. The wonderful old stories are there again: Samuel Hearne's trip to the northern sea with its intimate revelations of Chipewyan life in the 1770s; the trials of Lord Selkirk and his Highland crofters at Red River; the brave achievements of Arctic explorer, Dr. John Rae.

With the beginning of the Company's third century, the narrative becomes sketchy. The last hundred years — nearly one-third of the Company's existence, from Donald Smith to Lord Thomson — are crowded into twenty pages and these include full and double-page illustrations.

A sampling of the research and writing now underway on volume three of Newman's history of the Hudson's Bay Company covering this period could have freshened and given more balance to the illustrated history.

Helen Burgess is a Winnipeg publisher (Watson & Dwyer) and a former editor of "The Beaver".

A Life in the Theatre

By David Gardner

MARGARET ANGLIN
A Stage Life

By John Le Vay. Simon and Pierre Publishing Co., Toronto, 1989. 326 pp., illus. $39.95.

We are familiar with the careers of such Canadian (stage-cum-movie) stars as Mary Pickford, Marie Dressler and Raymond Massey because their fame was etched more universally on film and the larger marketplace demanded that their stories be made public. There are biographies, too, about other notable expatriates such as Mack Sennett, Guy Lombardo, Helen Morgan and John Murray Anderson, famous Canucks in the fields of comedy, music and revue. More slowly we are filling in the portrait gallery of our great stage personalities. The Canadian connections of nineteenth-century figures like Clara Morris and Henry Miller exist between covers, and the welcome word is out that a biography of matinee idol McKee Rankin is in the making. Entrepreneurs such as Ambrose Small and Ed Mirvish have been documented superficially and before Christmas 1988 we began catching up on the contemporary scene with a flurry of works looking at William Hutt, Diane Dupuy, Don Harron and John Drainie. Now, thirty-one years after her death, we must be grateful for an important and definitive biography of Margaret Anglin, Canada's answer to Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanora Duse and Sarah Siddons, considered by many to be, quite simply, the finest stage actress of her age.

Canada has a shy, silly attitude about hero-worship; a suspicious and puritanical fear about undue adulation. Margaret Anglin's strait-laced father attended only one of her early performances (in Buffalo) and kept his eyes closed during it.

Biographer John Le Vay quotes a wounded author's accusation that Anglin was motivated by "applause-lust", but fails to comment or make any point about the deep-seated need for approval and extra love that often informs, and drives, artists. Indeed this kind of analysis or loving justification is not to be found in Le Vay's biography, although in the original poem that graces the last page of the text, the author himself evokes the hope of a ghostly curtain call from his heroine.

Margaret Anglin (1876-1958), or M.A. as he identifies her throughout, was the only person ever born in the Canadian House of Commons, in the Speaker's chambers; the seventh of ten children of an Irish-Scots Victorian marriage. Educated at Loretto Abbey in Toronto and the Sacré Coeur Convent north of Montreal, Mary Margaret discovered drama and went to New York to further her studies of elocution. First appearances on the stage under the name of Margaret Moore led eventually to an engagement with Eugene O'Neill's father, James, who persuaded her to revert to her own name because it was "singular and arresting" and to get into Shakespeare because "you have the Irish Sea in your voice". On 3 October 1898, at the age of twenty-two, she appeared on Broadway as an ethereally beautiful Roxanne opposite Richard Mansfield's Cyrano de Bergerac. The next morning "she awoke to find herself famous". So began a remarkable and superbly documented three decades in which she starred in over eighty productions, became the last of the great actor-managers, toured, produced, directed and edited plays, earning over two million dollars, and establishing residences in New York; the Catskill Mountains; Surrey, England; and Paris. Blessed with a photographic memory, she was fluent in French, taught herself to read Greek, and was an accomplished horsewoman. Equally at home on stage in Greek tragedy, Shakespeare or the comedies of Oscar Wilde, she also introduced and financed an average of one or two new plays every season for approximately thirty years. In 1925, when she was nearing fifty, and the legitimate stage and her emotional style of acting were in decline, she succumbed to performing "high comedy" sketches for two-a-day vaudeville. Two years later she did a "carefully worded" testimonial for Lucky Strike cigarettes even though she really wasn't a smoker. During the depression M.A. lost her hus-

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band, and diminishing health and memory lapses forced her into poetry readings on platform stages and radio. Eventually in 1953, at the age of 77, Margaret Anglin was flown back to Toronto where her final days were spent in a nursing home. She died in the arms of her nephew, the author's father.

In his introduction John Le Vay describes his book as an "exercise of happy memory" and, in terms of weight, this is so. But it is the haunting and achingly sad deterioration, coming as it does after the decades of triumph, that leaves an indelible residue in the memory. Here is "Canada's Forgotten Great Actress" tragically left behind, a valiant victim of the ravages of age and the gradual passing of the legitimate theatre's golden hour. There is no sentimentality in the telling. Indeed, the biographer sometimes seems gratuitously callous in his concluding descriptions of his "dotty" great aunt.

I found myself only slowly coming to enjoy and admire this biography. For the first 90 pages or so, I chafed at the lack of any analysis or interpretation of events, and the reluctance to probe into the roots of M.A.'s genius. There were no attempts to make simple hereditary connections between Mary Margaret's gifts as a letter-writer and dramaturge, with her father's abilities as a journalist and editor. And her mother's career as an amateur singer and actress with the nineteenth-century Rideau Hall theatricals was barely sketched. Indeed, for 40 pages there was no hint of what she even looked like, except to say that she was thin. I can remember my pulse quickening on page 40 to learn from someone else's commentary that she had a "long slender hand and tapering fingers", and finally on pages 46 and 63 that she was tall (we read later 5'6"), and had red-golden hair and grey-green eyes. However, to be just, we do hear of the magnificent "cello-like" voice that could "throb and sob" and fill the back rows of vast outdoor auditoriums with thrilling nuance.

But great theatre biographies gamble, I told myself. Look at *Tynan* and *Laughton*, and the one on Ralph Richardson. They try to get inside the psyches of their subjects and hypothesize on the emotional bridges that join the recorded events. They search for intuitive insights into behaviour; they chart patterns. Perhaps because John Le Vay is M.A.'s grandnephew he is too far removed in time or, out of a sense of duty to his famous relative, too respectful. He employs teasing adjectives like "self-willed", "self-seeking" and "thin-skinned", but they are rarely explored. We get to know her as a public figure but not as a person. And obvious questions were not addressed: *eg.*, why was she born in the House of Commons rather than a hospital? Was it a conscious decision never to dig deeper and explain? Then I was irritated by the author-poet's inconsistent hyphenization of Mary-Margaret in the French manner and his annoying habit of sprinkling the text with untranslated *bons mots*. When someone is saturated with *amour-propre* twice within 23 pages (pp. 47 and 70) and "self-love" is not used once, I rebel.

With Chapter Five I began to melt and the *bons mots* receded. Her Australian tour and the delicate ending of the affair with Henry Miller were handled *avec élan*. Maybe I was approaching this assignment wrongly. Rigorous objectivity is to be praised. Le Vay's technique was simply to put down the facts, and assemble M.A.'s own words and other people's commentary or criticism, and let them tell the story. He informs us that she was a bit of a private person. Probably a little lingering mystery about Margaret Anglin is appropriate. His was a jig-saw puzzle methodology, and when I finished the book I reached for comparisons to pointillism in impressionist art — where daubs of paint were applied side by side, like the dots in newspaper photos or the electronic pulses on your television screen, assembling themselves into images at a proper distance. "A Seurat Biography", was my imagined review caption.

The weakness of Le Vay's honest practice was apparent at the beginning because scrapbooks and diaries were not available, and there were fewer published allusions to his subject. About the time she reached Australia her every movement was being recorded and the style joyously married the content. Images were saturated with colour. The dots didn't have to be joined together; the woman began to emerge on her own. I particularly recall the night she sat tucked in bed after a performance, reading a new script (*The Great Divide*) and letting her eggs get cold and her Guinness stout go flat. And there was another early, early morning where she was directing actors with her head swathed in wet towels to relieve the neuralgia. My favourite moment was when the unflappable Miss Anglin took 18 curtain calls with a boorish musical conductor who had joined her onstage and kissed her hand. Graciously M.A. kissed him on both cheeks before the cheering throngs and then, when the curtain finally fell for the last time, she slapped his

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face. Margaret Anglin could be a prima donna but she was a very human and witty one.

Her ongoing disagreement with Actors' Equity and her lonely-touching relationship with husband Howard Hull are made vividly real. However, while her artistry is clearly evident throughout, I longed to know more about how she created or interpreted certain specific roles. For instance, I have read material on her approach to Camille as a pretty ingenue with "a heart pure as a child's", sweet, lovable and "never vulgar" (*Hamilton Spectator*, 7 May 1904, p. 13), which was not included. Her important opinions about Duse being the best actress now before the public, because she is the simplest in her method (*Ibid.*, 17 December, 1904, p. 25) were also absent. In the realm of Canadian facts we read (on p. 245) that she was invited by Governor General Earl Grey to be a judge in his (Music and) Drama Competition, but do not learn that she presented a Best Actress bracelet in her name for that competition. As well, her portrayal of Mrs. Malaprop was first undertaken not in 1942 but in 1936 at the Mohawk Drama Festival in Schenectady, New York (DDF *Curtain Call* advertisement, June 1936). But these are merely missing dots amongst the literally thousands of new details that John Le Vay painstakingly has unearthed.

It is ultimately a rich and rewarding biography for both the casual theatre buff and the scholar. All dates and references are documented carefully and the editors have pioneered a system for notes that was innovative, at least to me. Instead of having to leaf to the end of a chapter or lose your place glancing to the bottom of the page, the source references are incorporated immediately into the text. At first it is disconcerting to read "(*Bohemian*, Nov. 1906)" in the middle of a sentence, but like TV commercials you quickly absorb the interruptions and hang on to the sense.

I longed for one colour photograph to capture the "spunbronze hair" and grey-green eyes, but colour photography probably wasn't available when she was in her prime. Instead we get a generous allotment of 37 full-page illustrations, one at least leading off each well-organized chapter and expertly related to the story-line. I was not as happy with the tattle-tale grey reproduction quality (once more through the rinse cycle), but it does give the volume stylistic coherence and a sense of period. Perhaps a different typeface could have been used for the photo captions to differentiate them from the main text and obviate any confusion when turning a page. I thought the dustjacket design was somewhat dull and old-fashioned. While M.A.'s love of lavender and lace handkerchiefs justifies the treatment, I felt it did no justice to the power and impact of the woman, and the book. The only typographical error I could find was also on the inside jacket — actor E. H. Sothern had become "Southern".

But books should not be judged by their covers. John Le Vay has earned his "curtain call" and deserves the Canadian theatre's profound respect for so skillfully rescuing M.A. from indifferent obscurity.

Now, if only Ottawa's National Arts Centre would name its Theatre after Margaret Anglin, as Herbert Whittaker has suggested!

Actor, director and theatre historian David Gardner wrote the entry for Margaret Anglin in the "Canadian Encyclopedia".

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Viewing an Alien Culture

By Frits Pannekoek

THE ORDERS OF THE DREAMED
George Nelson on Cree and Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823

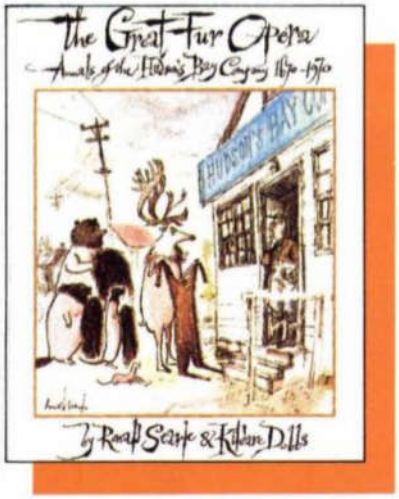
Edited by Jennifer S.H. Brown and Robert Brightman. University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 1989. 226 pp. $24.95.

The manuscript, written between March and June 1823 in the Lac La Ronge area by George Nelson, a Hudson's Bay Company clerk, is a must for those attempting a better understanding of nineteenth-century native belief structures, and as important, the impact that these belief structures had on the European traders. Often the traders are interpreted as having little interest in the subtleties of native culture. They are seen as struggling to preserve their European heritage in a hostile culture and physical environment. The imported library, the pianoforte and the white wife, *not* the material and spiritual cultures assimilated by the traders, have been the concern of the majority of historians. What a careful reading of Nelson should do is to lead us to investigate other journals from a different perspective. They can reveal a great deal about European-native cultures and their mutual transformation in the Canadian West.

There are several unpublished journals in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives that come immediately to mind. For example, in the 1740s Augustine Frost of Moose and later York Factory lived life as dictated by the dominant native culture. He was fully integrated into and accepted by the peoples of the Bayside. This caused him considerable grief with his Chief Factor, James Duffield, who hardly understood Frost's cultural preferences and therefore labelled him a renegade.

The historical introduction by Jennifer Brown, an associate professor of history at the University of Winnipeg, more particularly the anthropological insights of Robert Brightman, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, and most important the

The Great Fur Opera



—the hilarious spoof of the history of the Hudson's Bay Company written by Kildare Dobbs with illustrations by Ronald Searle—has become a Canadian comedy classic since it was published in 1970, the Honourable Company's 300th anniversary year. **The Beaver** is now offering a limited number of a special presentation edition at the low price of $19.98 (postage paid) while supplies last. For your copy of

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personal reminiscences of Stan Cuthand, an instructor of Cree at the University of Manitoba, and resident of the Lac La Ronge district, are amongst the best introductions I have read in some time. All will certainly enable historians to better understand the cultural environments of eighteenth-century Rupert's Land.

Most disturbing on the other hand is the note by Emma LaRocque of the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, "On the Ethics of Publishing Historical Documents". She suggests that documents like the Nelson manuscript should probably not be published, and furthermore hints that the manuscript should not be available for scholarly review. There is an intimation that similar archival material should be carefully censored to "combat slander, pornography, racism, hate or plain ignorance in literature". She states, "that these primary documents have contained deplorable material on native people seems to have largely escaped the eyes of most scholars". She does not say whether she feels Brown's, Cuthand's, or Brightman's introductions are deficient, but by not specifically excluding these from censure one does wonder.

LaRocque argues here, as she has in her other writings, that the principal problem with historical writing on the native peoples of Canada is the "civilization/savagism" dichotomy. She is convinced that Europeans' belief in their own cultural superiority is so strong that it has both consciously and subconsciously tainted scholars' observations on native culture, which they universally see as "savage", the lower opposite end of the scale from "civilized". She argues that this "civ/sav" dichotomy is present in Nelson's 1823 journal. She is correct. The Hudson's Bay fur trade journals contain unflattering comments about native peoples, about the competition, about women, about clerics, and about Orkneymen. But should that mean they must be suppressed? In any case the European views on native peoples, as Brown points out, have undergone considerable change over time. They have hardly been consistent in the last five hundred years.

Perhaps LaRocque has contracted the fatal disease of "presentism"? When she judges Nelson she does so in terms of her own twentieth-century experiences, not in the context of his culture and times. It should be noted that Jennifer Brown has presented an excellent section in her introduction on the origins of Nelson's belief structures. As far as I can determine, Professor Brown has avoided the "civ/sav" dichotomy.

LaRocque's observations are indeed ones that must lead to a great sadness on the part of scholars. Minimally she is suggesting that historical documents should be censored before they are published for a wider distribution. More broadly she is suggesting that many scholars and the general public cannot read a nineteenth-century document and understand its cultural and historical context. This says little for world scholarship and its efforts to achieve an unprejudiced understanding of any culture or time. In fact if her insinuations are taken to their natural extension, no one culture can really understand another. If this is correct, and I do not believe it so, there is little future for mankind.

It could be argued that the "civ/sav" dichotomy, so clearly enunciated by LaRocque in her earlier works, is only one way of looking at the Euro-centred interpretation of native people. Is it a dated perspective that was most relevant to LaRocque's own experiences of the 1970s? If there is a current rhetoric relating to native people (a rhetoric that some will find equally pejorative and unacceptable) it is not the rhetoric of racism, but rather the rhetoric of poverty.

The Nelson journals are strongly recommended not only to fur trade scholars, but to the student of native culture. In the end however, the journal, its introductions, and LaRocque's conclusions are equally valuable because they provide a statement on the state of native-white relations in the scholarly world. Let us hope they improve.

Frits Pannekoek is a fur trade scholar who lives in Edmonton.

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A Terrible Heritage

By Boyce Richardson

SKYSCRAPERS HIDE THE HEAVENS
A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada
By J.R. Miller. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1989. 329 pp., illus. $35.00.

The number and coverage of books about the history of Canadian Indians and their relationship with Europeans has increased enormously in the last couple of decades. Since the natives' psychological and political revival got under way in the 1960s, scholars, writers and native people themselves have added immeasurably to our understanding of this important aspect of Canadian history.

Many of these works have not only transformed our view of the Canadian past, but have held a mirror up to our contemporary political behaviour, helping us (or perhaps I should say, urging us) to face up to the consequences of the history we have inherited in this field.

We now have many excellent works covering this history in almost every region of the country, but there are still gaps. The history of contact and the two centuries following it has by now been well covered, and the many fine works about this period richly reward the attention of anybody interested in the fascinating history of this country.

Thanks to Louis Riel and the North West Rebellion of 1885, we also have plenty of detailed coverage of Western Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century, including the events leading up to and following the signing of the numbered treaties.

At least to my layman's eye, however, there have continued to be a couple of significant gaps in the coverage of this story. One of them is a detailed account of what in an article in this magazine a couple of years ago I called the century of decline: the period following the 1812 war, when the Europeans, having settled their quarrels about North America, decided that the native people were an irrelevant nuisance. [*The Beaver*, February/March 1987].

This is the century in which the natives declined both in numbers and morale, and were reduced in many parts of the country to an appalling condition after being herded into marginal lands incapable of sustaining them. This decline was a direct consequence of the coercive and arrogant policies adopted towards them by Canadian society. The Western treaties were the consequence of policies developed in Eastern Canada over the previous half century as settlement and the development of a European civilization became the priority of our governments, and it is the development and execution of these policies that, in comparison with other parts of this history, have been relatively ignored.

The failure of these policies has left us today with a profound responsibility to reverse the effects of these awful years, but our ability to do so has been hampered by the lack of understanding among contemporary Canadians of this terrible heritage. Is it possible that some sense of collective guilt has prevented our historians from really confronting this part of our history as thoroughly as they have confronted other parts of the story?

The second major gap in the scope of this historic coverage has been the lack of a convincing, coherent overview of the whole story. It is perhaps asking a lot to expect such a thing. But — always bearing in mind the need for a sharper contemporary understanding of how native people got into their present marginalized and pauperized condition — I have felt for a long time that someone should at least try.

J.R. Miller, of the University of Saskatchewan, has now stepped into this gap, as it were, in an interesting work notable for its balance and objectivity. What he has attempted to do, for the most part, is to create a synthesis of the best work that has been done by other historians. On the first page of his preface he names 11 contemporary historians, anthropologists and ethnologists from whose works, he says, "I learned that Indian peoples were not the passive victims that were found in so many older accounts of Canadian history." This is the theme of the first third of his book, covering the period in which native peoples were commercial partners and military allies of the arriving Europeans.

This story, and the interpretation of it that Miller has inherited from these other writers, is by now relatively well-known, but he tells it lucidly, and his account of the extent to which natives co-operated with the Europeans, and benefitted from the partnership, will, I am sure, surprise many lay readers. In fact, he goes so far as to say that for many decades, the natives, not the Europeans, were the dominant partner.

The second third of his book is mostly concerned with the development of Canadian policy in the early years of the nineteenth century, and its aftermath, the very themes which have been so largely neglected. Although Miller's historian's objectivity never slips, there

is an underlying passion to his bland account of the horrors of these policies, as they were slowly developed by a self-confident and moralizing frontier society, that brings his book to life. In this section he shows how policies initially intended for the moral protection of native peoples gradually declined into what he calls "the depths of coercion".

An impulse to protect the natives from "the cycle of squatting-resistance-conflict-dispossession" was "laid over top of the objectives of the Bagot Commission and missionaries to assimilate the Indians through education and adoption of agriculture".

Though Indians were not opposed to education and agriculture, they were always opposed to assimilation, to being turned into facsimiles of white people. But from this period legislators began to ignore Indian opinion, and to introduce what Miller calls "ominous measures that threatened to undermine the base of Indians' identity and survival — their land".

The story is a very painful one to read, even in Professor Miller's unemotional prose. One dreadful policy was piled on another, year after year. The policy of enfranchisement, of forcing Indians to abandon their status and identity; the policy of setting aside the Royal Proclamation provisions regarding Indian lands; the policies of enforced education in residential schools; the surrender treaties, removing Indians from the path of development. These all had their origin in the decades before Confederation.

He writes: ". . . both churches and governments edged steadily from protection to compulsion and from cooperation to coercion," and adds:

> The downward slide of Indian policy between 1830 and Confederation was both a reflection of the changing relationship and a portent of things to come. The move towards interference and compulsion was intelligible only against a shifting background in which Indians became increasingly marginal to the desires of the newcomers, but in which Indians refused to concede their defeat. Indian resistance, however, merely served to provide more coercive policies by missionaries and officials. The do-gooders concluded that Indian recalcitrance was the principal obstacle to the success of their policies.

He carries this story through the well-known events of the Western treaties and rebellion — placing a major emphasis on the character and mental condition of Riel himself — and in the last third of his book moves into more contemporary events, right up to the present day. He concludes:

> A century and a half of attempts by Euro-Canadian society to define the role of natives and to impose that destiny on them have added up to miserable failure. Aside from the effective removal of Indians from the land, none of the policies of the Bible and the plough has been successful . . . Attempts by governments, churches and the general population to change Indians, Metis and Inuit into just another ethnic group in the multicultural mosaic have failed. It is past time that these policies were abandoned.

Professor Miller makes a harsh indictment of both our historical and contemporary attitudes: the basic problem, he says, has always been a failure to consult with native peoples in a meaningful way, that is, actually listening to what they say. This is not just a matter of history. He convicts both the Trudeau and Mulroney governments of continuing this unhappy legacy, the first through the appalling 1969 White Paper, which bore no relationship whatsoever to the wishes of the Indians as expressed in the extensive consultation process which preceded it; the second, through their arrogant abandonment in 1987 of the effort to formalize the constitutional entrenchment of native rights, and through the appalling insensitivity of the Nielsen Task Force's proposal — arrived at totally without native participation — that the federal government should jettison all responsibility for native affairs.

"Surely there cannot be any defensible argument for refusing to consult native peoples about policy and allowing them to control the administration of the programs that are supposedly for their benefit?", writes Professor Miller. "Can anyone point to the consequences of a century and more of paternalistic administration in which programs were decided by people remote from the Indians and administered by officials who were not answerable to them, and argue that they were

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at all successful? In the face of the chilling statistics on school dropouts, unemployment, poverty, ill health, family breakdown, incarceration and early deaths, such an argument seems impossible. The record shows no reason to refuse natives control over the development and administration of policies that affect them."

Though harsh in his judgment of Canadian attitudes, he does not shrink from criticizing the recent conduct of native leaders. He criticizes them for knee-jerk reactions, overblown rhetoric, and a ghetto mentality which suggests that all those who are not for them are against them. He suggests that their growing political divisions are a major source of weakness, and that their tactics are often confused and confusing. The current attempt of the native leadership to break away from being regarded as just another interest group, and instead to gain status as representatives of Nations, he regards as unlikely to succeed, and concludes that the only sure path to success is through development of "a real partnership" with "cooperative policies that have the support of government, native organizations and the general population . . ."

Professor Miller's book will be of tremendous help to the many Canadians of goodwill who want to understand what happened in history, how we got to where we are in our relations with the native people, and how we might find a better way.

If I have one reservation, it is not because of anything Professor Miller has failed to do. He has succeeded in writing a lucid and scholarly account, but he has largely omitted the excitement and drama of the story. In page after page, I kept wishing he would go into more detail, try to bring the history more alive in the characters and actions of the people concerned. That was not his aim, and I do not criticize him for it.

What he has given us, though perhaps unexciting, is thoughtful, measured, and committed; and it fills a real gap that has existed in an historical record that is being improved year by year.

Boyce Richardson is an Ottawa writer and filmmaker.

'A colonial fame at 23'

By Tina Loo

ROBERT BROWN AND THE VANCOUVER ISLAND EXPLORING EXPEDITION

Edited by John Hayman. University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1989. 228 pp., illus. $29.95.

In the spring of 1865, some six months after the completion of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, its commander reflected on his achievements with some satisfaction. "Though I have not done one tittle of what I might have done," Robert Brown wrote, "this is not so bad — a colonial fame at 23". At the time Brown was subsisting on a diet of sherry and eggs while he awaited his government bonus: such was the nature of his colonial fame. The transiency of Brown's fame and its meagre rewards paralleled the difficulties and tenuousness of settlement in Vancouver Island that are revealed in his journals, here reprinted by the University of British Columbia Press with an introduction by John Hayman. An occasional contributor to *The Beaver,* Hayman recovers Robert Brown from relative obscurity and establishes him as an important British Columbia explorer and ethnographer.

Born on 23 March 1842 in Caithness, Scotland, Robert Brown studied botany at the University of Edinburgh. Expeditions to apply his newly-found scientific knowledge in the field almost routinely interrupted his studies. It was during one of these interruptions that Brown came to the young colony of Vancouver Island. Appointed in February 1863 by the British Columbia Botanical Association of Edinburgh to "collect Seeds, Roots and Plants", Brown arrived in Victoria in May of the same year. During the next five months the young botanist explored the island's west coast and made forays to both the Olympic peninsula and the mainland. Much to the annoyance of his Scottish sponsors, however, Brown failed to collect the seeds for which he was commissioned. His attempts to convince the Botanical Association of the value of his wider explorations fell on deaf ears; so when in the spring of 1864 a Victoria-based and government-funded committee was organized to explore Vancouver Island, Brown seized the opportunity to escape the narrow confines of his job as a "poor unknown plant hunter".

As commander of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition, Brown undertook "such work as would fall to the lot of a Botanist, Zoologist & Geologist", and promised to "furnish an accurate & complete report upon the topography, soil, timber & resources". When the expedition left Victoria on H.M.S. *Grappler* on 7 June 1864 it had expanded to include Frederick Whymper, the Expedition's artist; another botanist; two former Royal Engineers; a McGill University graduate; a Cambridge-trained "practical farmer"; an American miner; and the son of a Hudson's Bay Company Chief Trader. At their first stop in the Cowichan Valley, Brown engaged the services of Tomo Antoine, an Iroquois who had been in the employ of the HBC, as the Expedition's guide and hunter.

From Cowichan, Brown and his party journeyed overland to Cowichan Lake. There the Expedition split into two groups, one led by Peter Leech and the other by Brown. Both made their way to the west coast of the island, meeting at Port San Juan. Leech led the rest of the team to Sooke while Brown left for Victoria to clarify matters with the committee. It was during this leg that the Expedition made its most notable discovery — gold.

By the time Brown's party regrouped at Cowichan and made their way north to Nanaimo, the Leech River rush was at its peak. Brown had difficulty procuring Indian packers and feared his own men would desert. High wages and cash advances prevented both these things, and the Expedition proceeded, with Brown's group going farther north to Comox, and Leech's party to Cowichan Lake. The two met at Alberni and made their way back to the east coast of the island by way of Qualicum and Nanaimo, where they again boarded the *Grappler* for the trip back to Victoria.

Travelling almost six hundred miles over the course of five months, the expedition exposed the island's rich natural endowments. Despite his scientific training, Brown made it a point to underscore the island's commercial potential. The dense forests through which the expedition trudged were notable for the fine spars they could yield, and the land was of interest for both the natural flora it bore and its suitability for agriculture. As well, the journals reveal that a variety of less conventional economic ventures carried on by an equally unconventional cast of characters were already underway. Brown noted a vibrant trade in dogfish oil along the west coast; a scheme by two Carolina black men to manufacture turpentine from the resin of the island's Douglas firs; and a lucrative and illegal liquor trade run by "one of Walker's Filibusters in Nicaragua".

As Hayman points out in his introduction, Robert Brown established himself as an ethnographer as well as an explorer. Like many of his contemporaries, Brown believed the native population of North America was doomed to extinction. Yet the journals note a substantial native presence in the island's local economy. Brown took a relatively sympathetic and liberal view of Vancouver Island's native people, pointing out the inequality of treatment and the need to settle the question of land title. Despite this, he retained his belief in the superiority of settled agriculture, criticizing the natives' failure to cultivate their land as the Europeans did. Brown's observations of Indian life were supplemented with information gathered through conversations with Tomo Antoine, and were included in a separate publication, *The Races of Mankind*, excerpts of which are reprinted here along with the Expedition's journals. In addition to the information regarding Indian placenames and customs contained in Brown's writings, Frederick Whymper's drawings, which illustrate the text, are also of ethnographic value.

These themes emerge from a reading of Brown's journals but perhaps could have been made more explicit by a more sharply focused introduction. In addition, Hayman might have placed Robert Brown in the context of Victorian natural history. As he does indicate, Robert Brown never struck a comfortable balance between the scholarly and the commercial. In his relations with the Botanical Association of Edinburgh and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition Committee, as well as in his later writings, Brown was torn between the purely scientific pursuit of knowledge and its more economic applications. He was not alone, for such a conflict was inherent in nineteenth-century natural history which, as one Canadian historian writes, "was born of wonder and nurtured by greed". These criticisms aside, however, Hayman's well-researched book with its previously unknown Whymper illustrations is an important contribution to the early history of Vancouver Island.

Frederick Whymper, "The Rampant Raft", from "Robert Brown and the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition".

Tina Loo is a doctoral student in history at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

In Search of Bourgmont

By Graham MacDonald

BOURGMONT
Explorer of the Missouri, 1698-1725
By Frank Norall. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1988. 192 pp., illus. $18.95.

A history of the relationship between global exploration and exiled outcasts could probably be quite a long book. One thinks of the early Norse pioneers of Iceland and Greenland; of Australian settlement generally; of the unpredictable team of Radisson and Groseilliers and of that large collection of explorers-cum-pirates, fondly recalled from the English Elizabethan period. The subject of the book under review may take his place beside all of these. Many Canadian readers are familiar with the exploits of Bourgmont's great contemporary from Quebec, Pierre Gaultier, Sieur de La Vérendrye, who approached the Missouri watershed from the north and east. Bourgmont came at it from the south, but since he did not leave any great body of writings, we know much less about him than we do of La Vérendrye. The two men were part of a common enterprise, however, one that was not totally eclipsed by the fall of Quebec in 1759. Before this date French colonial policy in North America was driven by a desire to link the distant centres of Quebec and New Orleans. By so doing, they might hope to keep the English colonists hemmed in behind the Appalachian Mountains and conduct a successful trade with the many native tribes scattered between the Gulf of Mexico and the Upper Great Lakes. The strategy was that of establishing a kind of *cordon sanitaire* extending in a great arc separating English and Spanish alike from the Indian trade. The fall of Quebec might have been expected to relieve the fears of those living in the Thirteen Colonies, but English policy moved in a different direction. With the passage of the Quebec Act in 1774 the old barrier was perceived by the English colonists still to be in place, for the act seemed to represent a revival of the old French tactic. For this reason, the colonists viewed the Quebec Act as one of several "intolerable acts" soon to drive them to rebellion. With the outcome of the American Revolution and the indifference of the new revolutionary regime in France towards its North American empire, the *cordon sanitaire* idea was finally put to rest once and for all in 1803. The tale which unfolds in this book, however, takes us back before these upheavals and reveals the extent of French ambition in the New World and the very real genius for diplomacy exercised by that nation before the fall of New France.

The author has been diligent in his painstaking search for information concerning the life and career of Etienne de Veniard, sieur de Bourgmont (1679-1734). Half of the book is devoted to appendices which review the archival and bibliographic record and which reproduce the fragmentary travel accounts which constitute the main contribution to geographic knowledge made by the explorer. Much more was lost in the vessel which was taking him back to France. The *Le Bellone* sank off the coast of Mobile Bay while riding at anchor in 1725. There were few casualties but the entire ship's holdings were lost, including the writings of Bourgmont. Relatively few historians have addressed the career of Bourgmont, although among those few are some influential writers, such as Pierre Margray and Marcel Giraud. Norall was dissatisfied with the sketchy nature of knowledge about the man and his travels and thus set about to bring together "all the known facts about him in one study". It is the story of the "fall and rise" of one of the most remarkable but least known figures in the history of America. It is indeed the story of a pilgrim's progress, and Bourgmont, like some French Barry Lyndon, moves from humble and unfortunate beginnings upwards toward respectability.

A commonplace of the interpretation of French-Indian relations in North America states that the French were consistently successful in their exercise of diplomacy. This was reinforced by the disposition of many of the *coureurs de bois* to form alliances with native women and to seek out the life of the wilderness rather than that of metropolitan France. Bourgmont appears to be a personality perfectly in tune with this model. Leaving France under a cloud as a young man, he joined the colonial military forces in Quebec. Posted to Detroit, he demonstrated courage in a difficult situation, but then fell further out of favour. He was inclined toward the Indians and depleted his social standing further by deserting the military in 1706. He headed into the wilderness where he spent many years with the Missouri Indians. By 1714 we know that

A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

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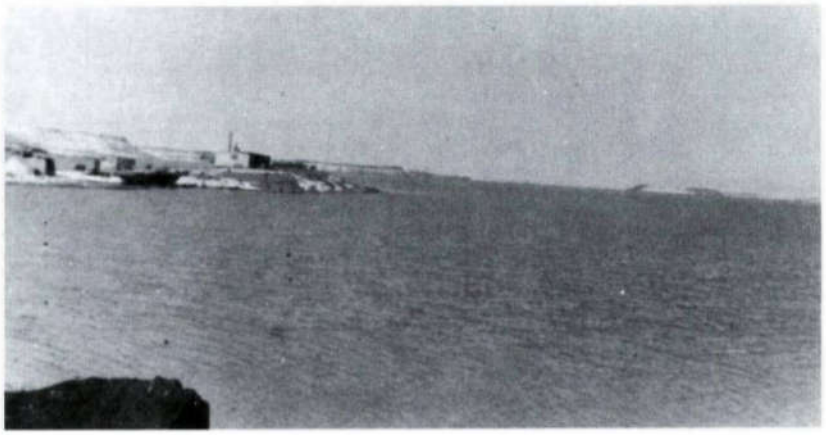
he had married a Missouri woman and fathered a son whom he greatly loved. This son would play an important symbolic role when several years later, and with the full backing of the king, Bourgmont headed back into the Missouri country from New Orleans to undertake a diplomatic mission to the "Padoucas" — the designation for the Apaches. How Bourgmont's fortunes should have reversed themselves in such a brief time, is revealed with a fine dramatic sense by Norall; nor does he leave out the elements which were then helping to shape the larger world scene. The collapse of the South Sea Bubble in 1720 suddenly put Louisiana into a state of financial crisis. The knowledge which Bourgmont had gained in the years before 1720 made him an important economic resource, outlaw or not. The royal strategy was to now forge a peace between their traditional Indian allies such as the Missouri and Kansas Indians, and the ever-agitated Apaches. The assumption was that in so doing, the French colony might extend trade to the Spanish, while keeping the Spanish out of the Indian territories. The theory had little to recommend it since there was no convenient route to the Spanish trade through the territory of present-day Kansas, but no one at that time knew this to be the case. Bourgmont was successful in his assignment at the diplomatic level, and he returned to Paris with several Indian Chiefs in tow, an act which added considerably to his reputation. He lived to gather his reward in France — elevation to the nobility. For his countrymen, he had done much to reveal the existence of what Norall called "a new world within the New World" — the vast expanse of the Missouri Basin.

Graham MacDonald is a Winnipeg historical consultant.

THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

Resting Place Unknown



On or about 20 June, 1929, Ian MacKay Christie died on Banks Peninsula, N.W.T. He had left the Canalaska Post with L.T. Rader on June 19th to hunt rabbits. The post was located on the east side of Banks Peninsula, Bathurst Inlet, at approximately 67° 26′ N, 108° 30′ W. Death was due to exposure, Mr. Christie having fallen in a creek and then experiencing a violent storm which lasted from 19 June to 22 June. He was buried at the post on 23 June.

This past July I accompanied the Warners of Bathurst Inlet Lodge and a relative of the deceased from Scotland on a visit to the area. Remains of a post are evident but we did not see any trace of a grave.

I am enclosing a photo of the grave which was in the family's possession and also a photo of a post which may or may not be the one mentioned above.

I was wondering if you would care to publish something about this in the "Packet" with the hope that some long-time reader might recognize the areas.

I always look forward to *The Beaver* and have been a subscriber for over 30 years.

J. David O'Brien,
Pickering, Ontario

General Wolfe: The Yorkshire Connection

The article by R.G. Moyles on General James Wolfe and the long-held fantasy that he went to the battle for Quebec City quoting from Gray's "Elegy" [*The Beaver*, August/September 1989], makes the point that Wolfe was created a hero at a time when British pride needed a boost. It recalls evidence to be found in York, England, of that hero-worship.

In what is probably the oldest building in the city to be turned into a pub — the Black Swan, built about 1403 — there is a "Wolfe Room" named after the hero of Quebec and used in recent years to stage that unique extravaganza of the British Isles known as "a medieval banquet".

According to G. Bernard Wood, F.R.S.A., writing in *Yorkshire Life* (October 1959) in the bi-centenary year of the death of General Wolfe, "Many fingers are being pointed to the Black Swan Inn at York as the general's birthplace. Wolfe, however, was *not* born here, [he was born in Kent] though it was certainly his parents' residence soon after their marriage. The association is recalled in St. Cuthbert's Church, just opposite, where you can see the Canadian flag raised near the altar in permanent tribute to General Wolfe."

It may have been this slim Canadian connection that helped make the Black Swan a favourite rendezvous for Canadian servicemen during World War II, a few dozen of whom signed the Visitor's Book, (several of which I have managed to trace) although its convenient location in the midst of Canadian Bomber Command air stations scattered throughout Yorkshire no doubt helped.

On a trip to York a few years ago I learned that there was once a small and ancient church to the right of the pub called St. Clement's which was known to the locals as "The Birthplace of Canada" because of an inscription stating that General Wolfe had been baptized there.

Parts of the Black Swan have an even stronger Canadian connection. One of its charms is the original main staircase with a massive bannister, all of whose wooden globes — about the size of an old cannonball — are replacements. The manager, Robert Atkinson, advised that an old employee of the brewery that owns the pub told him that, during the war, he had practically a full-time job replacing those globes, since servicemen found them so irresistible as souvenirs. Atkinson added, "No doubt several found their way to Canada."

Fergus Cronin,
Palgrave, Ontario

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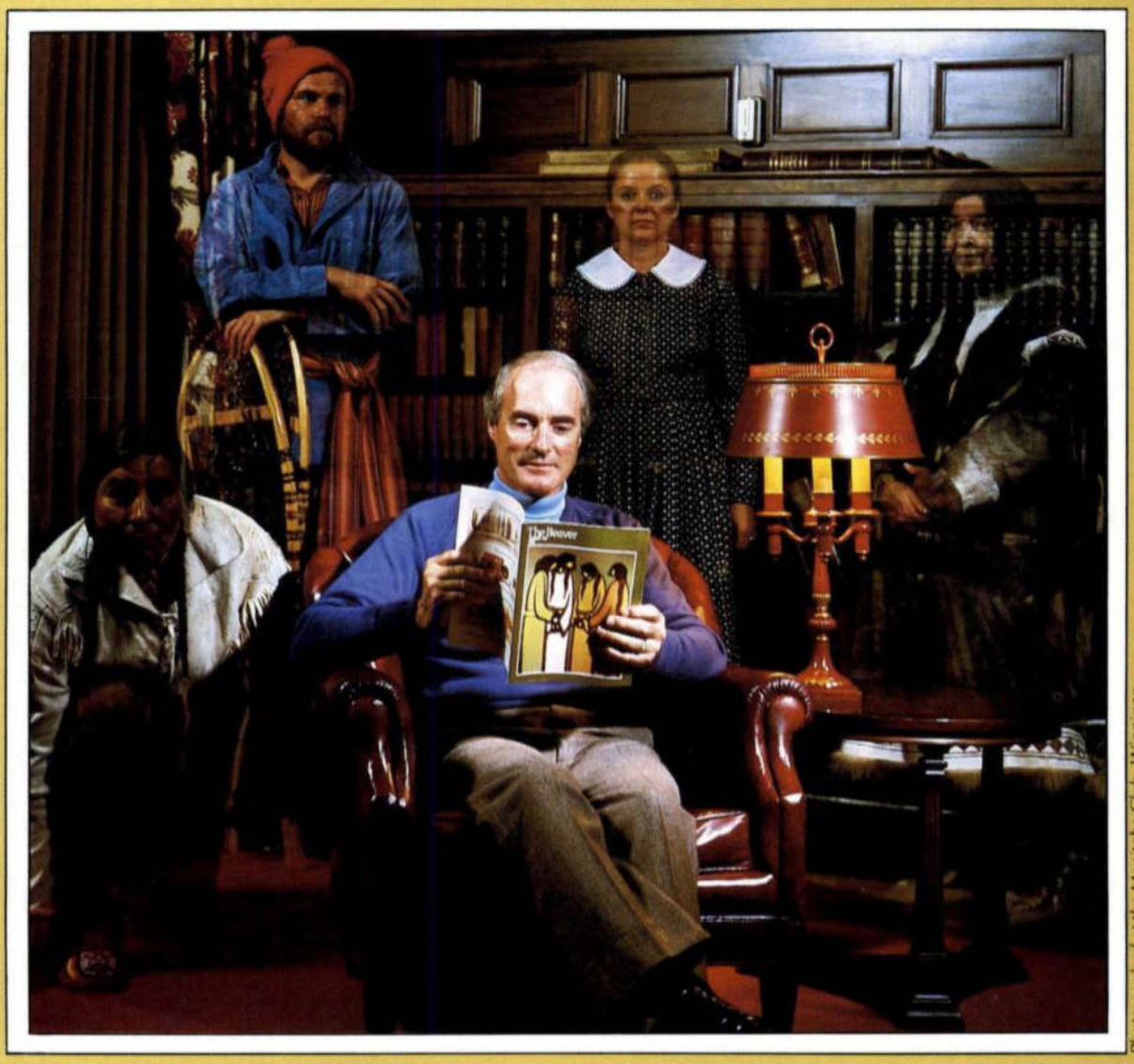

Photographed at the Manitoba Club, Winnipeg

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